

SURVEY OF
INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

1937

VOLUME II

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SURVEY OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS 1937

VOLUME II THE INTERNATIONAL REPERCUSSIONS OF THE WAR IN SPAIN (1936-7)

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Τὴν δ' ἀπαμειβόμενος προσέφη γεφεληγερέτα Ζεύς·
"Θάρσει, Τριτογένεια, φίλον τέκοισιού νύ τι θυμῷ
πρόσφρονι μυθέομαι, ἔθέλω δέ τοι ἡπιος εἶναι.
ἴρξον δηπι τοι νόδος ἔπλετο, μηδ' ἔτ' ἔρώει."
"Ὦς εἰπών ὃτρυνε πάρος μεμαυταν Ἀθήνην
βῆ δὲ κατ' Οὐλύμπιοι καρήνων δίξασι.

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PREFACE

THE war which broke out in Spain in the summer of 1936 presents the historian with another case of the problem, already noticed in the preface to the *Survey for 1937*, of a break-down of the conventional distinction between 'international' and 'internal' affairs. In this case the problem is particularly acute; for the question whether the war in Spain was a Spanish civil war or an international war in a Spanish arena was in debate from the moment when hostilities began; and this burning question was not merely a subject of acrimonious academic controversy throughout the World; it was also a political issue—fraught with the danger of a drift into a general war—between the Governments of five Great Powers.

The transactions between these Powers, together with the rest of the European states, in regard to the war in Spain fall, on any showing, within the field of a survey of international affairs, and these transactions are dealt with in Part III, Sections (ii) and (iii), of the present volume, under the major head of 'The Powers and Non-Intervention' and the minor head of 'The Powers and Humanitarian Activities'. To present these sections by themselves would, however, have been to leave them virtually unintelligible. The action of the Powers cannot be understood without some understanding of their interests and motives; and accordingly these have been surveyed in the same Part III, in an introductory section (i). But even a comprehensive account of the interests, motives and actions of the Powers in regard to the Spanish War would be left 'in the air' if it were not brought to earth by being attached to an account of the course of the war itself, out of which all this international action and consideration and emotion arose; and accordingly the third part of the volume, which deals with the Powers, has been prefaced by a second part dealing with the war. A Spanish reader, perhaps, could plunge straight into a narrative of the hostilities that began in Spain on the 18th July, 1936, without needing to be reminded of a political, social and psychological background of which he would be directly aware because it would all be contained within the microcosm of his own soul. This *Survey*, however, is primarily intended for the use of an English-reading public of which all but a tiny minority will have been born and bred beyond the bounds of the Iberian Peninsula; and for this modern Western public an account of the origins and course of the war that broke out in Spain in 1936 would hardly be comprehensible if it were not set against the panorama of a local

background which was strikingly, and perhaps also profoundly, different from that of the twentieth-century Western World outside the realm of *Don Quixote*. Accordingly, in the present volume, the second part, dealing with the war, has been prefaced, in its turn, by a first part dealing with its background.

Through this receding vista of prefaces to prefaces it is hoped that the field of this volume has been carried up to a 'natural frontier' in the direction of the Past. In the opposite direction it would have been convenient if (as proved possible in the second volume of the *Survey for 1935*, which was concerned with the war in Abyssinia) the narrative could have been carried down to some conclusive point which might be held to mark the close of a chapter, at any rate, if not the end of the whole story. Unhappily such a point was not yet within sight even at the time of the writing of this preface in October 1938; and the narrative has therefore been broken off arbitrarily at the end of the calendar year 1937, when the war in Spain, and the international activities arising out of it, were still in mid career.

As a matter of fact, any attempt to publish a 'self-contained' volume on the war in Spain would be doomed to failure even if the historian were in a position to wait until the fifth act of the tragedy had been played out; for, in spite of the partial insulation of twentieth-century Spain, on the mental and moral planes, from other parts of the contemporary world, she was enmeshed on the political and economic planes by a thousand threads that interwove her destinies with those of the rest of a, by this time, oecumenical 'Great Society'. A reader who wishes to make sure of fully grasping the subject of this volume is advised to read it synoptically with the *Survey for 1936*, Part III, Section (vii) ('Relations between Germany and Italy'), and Part IV ('The Mediterranean'), and with the *Survey for 1937*, vol. i, Part I ('The League of Nations and "the Anti-Comintern Triangle"'), Part IV, Section (i) ('Relations between the four European Great Powers'), and Part V ('The Mediterranean').

The whole of the present volume has been written by members of the staff of Chatham House. Part II is the work of Miss Katharine Duff. The rest is the work of the two writers whose names appear on the title-page.

ARNOLD J. TOYNBEE.

October 1938.

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PART I

THE SPANISH BACKGROUND OF THE WAR IN SPAIN

(i) Some Features in the Spanish Social Landscape

IN and after the year 1936, Spain was the theatre of a war in which the Spaniards themselves were heavily engaged, but in which the principals were non-Spanish Powers. This was not, of course, the first time that the Iberian Peninsula had been made to serve as an arena for a combat between outsiders. When the Peninsula first swims into the historian's ken in the third century B.C., the curtain rises upon the prelude to an oecumenical conflict between Rome and Carthage for the dominion of the Mediterranean World; and this conflict broke out in Spain before spreading to the respective metropolitan territories of the Italian and the North-West African protagonist. In the history of our modern Western World, the General War of the Spanish Succession was partly fought on Spanish soil in the shape of a Spanish civil war (1704-14) in which the Castilian partisans of a Bourbon claimant to the Spanish throne were assisted by French forces in a struggle against the Valencian and Catalan partisans of a Hapsburg claimant backed by an anti-French Grand Alliance. Similarly, in the General War of 1792-1815, an incident which played an important part in bringing about the ultimate decision was a struggle in the Peninsula (1807-14) between French invaders and Portuguese and Spanish patriots who provided a *locus standi* for effective intervention by a British expeditionary force. It will be seen that, in the rather sombre history of the Peninsula, this concatenation of a parochial with an oecumenical conflict was no new thing. In a survey of international affairs the oecumenical aspect of the Peninsular War which broke out in 1936 is, of course, the historian's primary concern. The precedents just cited indicate, however, that the international side of this war in Spain could hardly be made intelligible without taking some note of the domestic side of it as well. And the purpose of the present chapter is to place the war in its Spanish setting.

In a work written for non-Spanish readers, this part of the historian's task is particularly necessary because, at the time of the outbreak of the latest war in Spain in the summer of 1936, Spain herself was—and had been for at least two centuries and a half—

lying water-logged in a backwater out of the main stream of Western history.¹ This wide discrepancy between the parochial Spanish and the general Western culture of the age is perhaps the key to the repeated combination between a civil war in Spain and an oecumenical conflict in the Western World. In the first place, the current Western ideas and institutions of the time were so alien from the traditional Spanish *éthos* that their impact upon Spanish life was apt to produce violent reactions. In the second place, Spain herself—owing to her ‘backwardness’ in terms of modern Western social and technical standards—was materially at the mercy of more ‘advanced’ neighbours who were prone to see their interest in exploiting her troubles for their own purposes. In this respect the situation in 1936 was essentially the same as it had been in 1807–14 and 1704–14. Conversely, the violent impact of modern Western cultural forces upon Spanish life, and the high-handed exploitation of the resulting Spanish strife in the selfish interests of foreign Powers,² forced the Spaniards—each time that they were presented with the issue—to make a choice between embracing an alien way of life, as the only practical means of holding their own in an alien world, or

¹ See F. Borkenau, *The Spanish Cockpit* (London, 1937, Faber), pp. 5 and 23. To a British or Irish reader in 1936, perhaps the most illuminating way of indicating the spirit of Spain at this date would be to compare it with the contemporary spirit of the Six Counties in Northern Ireland that had been excluded from the domain of the Irish Free State. Like the Six Counties at this date, Spain (apart from Catalonia and the Three Basque Provinces) was ‘a living museum’ of the spiritual life of the Western World in the age of the Wars of Religion. Spain was a Catholic and Ulster a Protestant specimen of the same, elsewhere past, spiritual state of Western Society.

² In 1936–7 the foreign interventionists in Spain were perhaps more sincere and less cynical than their predecessors had been in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries; for in the second quarter of the twentieth century the Western World as a whole seemed to be reverting from the temper of its Voltairean epoch to that of the age of the Wars of Religion which Spain had never left behind. This point is dealt with in the following illuminating passage from an unpublished address on ‘The Ideas and Facts behind the Spanish Civil War’ which was delivered by Professor José Castillejo at Chatham House on the 6th October, 1936: •

‘Finally, there was the general situation in the world. I believe that there are movements in our times which we cannot see because we are too near them. One of them is the religious spirit of the masses. Almost all the wars now are religious wars. The Spanish Revolution at present is a religious war. I mean religious in the sense of fighting for dogmatic creeds. The first essential condition is that you must not understand what you are fighting for. The Spaniards, when they fought against the Protestants, fought violently because they did not understand what a Protestant was. Possibly many Protestants did the same. It is just a combination of faith with ignorance. But our religious wars are not now fought only for a spiritual cause, they have a basis of materialism. So they are materialistic in their aims and religious in their form, their methods and their results.’

rejecting it in the hope that the survival-power of their own tradition might ultimately prove to be greater than that of the momentarily more potent alien force. The Spaniards were not, of course, the only people beyond the pale of the modern Western World who had been confronted with this question. The Russians, for example, had had to face it in the last quarter of the seventeenth century and the Japanese in the third quarter of the nineteenth, and both these non-Western peoples had chosen the alternative of Westernization. The Spaniards were remarkable in having shown, up to date, a strong repugnance against accepting the corresponding choice of modernization.¹ The exceptions which proved this general Spanish rule were the modernism of the Catalans,² who had never fallen out of step with the main body of the Western Society since the foundation of Catalonia in the ninth century of the Christian Era, and the modernization of the Basques in the Three Provinces,³ who had been naturalized as citizens of the modern Western Great Society as a result of the rapid and far-reaching industrialization of the seaward part of their country—which was within easy reach of British ports—since the beginning of the last quarter of the nineteenth century.⁴

In the rest of Spain in 1936 the modern culture of the West, while perhaps more successfully acclimatized than in contemporary Russia or Japan, was still an exotic plant—and this in spite of the fact that an overwhelming majority of Spaniards professed a religion which was likewise professed by large sections of the population of some of the leading countries of the contemporary Western World (e.g. France and Belgium and Holland and Switzerland and Germany and the United States). The truth seems to be that the community of life and outlook that went with this common Catholicism did not go very deep. The Catholicism of the Trans-Pyrenean countries of Europe was a Catholicism which had taken the lesson of the Reformation to

¹ Borkenau, *op. cit.*, pp. 5 and 24.

² See pp. 25–7, below.

³ See p. 39, below.

⁴ Previously, the Basque country had lived quite as secluded and old-fashioned a life as any other part of the Peninsula. Indeed, the isolation of this region from the surrounding parts of Europe since time immemorial was attested by the survival, here alone, of a pre-Indo-European language. While the Basques had been suddenly shaken out of their age-long seclusion by the impact of the Industrial Revolution from Great Britain, the Castilians—who had previously been less impervious than the Basques to cultural influences from outside the Peninsula—were being handicapped culturally by their political dominance, which made Castile the centre of gravity of all the forces of social reaction in Spain so long as these forces remained in the ascendant. In themselves the Castilians were perhaps not less susceptible of modernization than the Basques, and they were certainly more susceptible of it than either the Andalusians or the Galicians.

heart and had put its salutary experience into practice, first in the Counter-Reformation and thereafter in the Catholic social activities which had played so prominent and so admirable a part in the lives of the industrial populations of Belgium and the Rhineland and Westphalia during the last half century. On the other hand, the forces that had evoked these activities in the Trans-Pyrenean Catholic World had hardly impinged upon Spain. The Reformation had been successfully prevented from ever gaining even a temporary foothold within her frontiers,¹ and the Industrial Revolution had affected no more than her Basque and Catalan fringes. This lack of challenge and stimulus² was reflected in the state of the Catholic Church in Spain at the moment when it was engulfed by the cataclysm of 1936. Except in the Basque Provinces, where the Church was playing as fruitful a part in the life of an industrialized people as it was in contemporary Western Germany,³ the Catholic Church in Spain had relapsed into—in so far as it had ever shaken itself out of—the condition of the Church in Western Christendom at large before the days of the Council of Trent.⁴

This is not, of course, to say that in Spain the Church had become an anti-social institution. At the time here in question, the Catholic religious orders—and not least the Jesuits, who became the special targets of Spanish popular odium—were doing educational and charitable work in Spain of which the value was demonstrated by the untoward effects of its forcible suppression. Nor was the Catholic Church in Spain at this time stretching a dead hand over the ownership of the land. The Church's hereditary endowment in the shape of real property in Spain had been confiscated by the Spanish State

¹ On the other hand, Spaniards had, of course, played an important part in the Trans-Pyrenean Counter-Reformation.

² The countries in which Catholicism was showing the greatest vigour at the time of writing were, all of them, countries in which the Catholic community had been schooled either by the positive adversity of suffering persecution or by the negative adversity of finding itself in a minority.

³ Borkenau, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

⁴ Borkenau, *op. cit.*, p. 9. It is worth noting that Saint Ignatius Loyola was a Basque from the Province of Guipúzcoa; for this may partly explain Saint Ignatius's success in founding an institution which has been thoroughly at home in the modern Western World and has, in fact, been one of its formative forces. He met and mastered the Renaissance with the same strength of will as was shown by other Basques, four hundred years later, in meeting and mastering the Industrial Revolution. The lastingness of the practical success of Saint Ignatius's work—which contrasts so strikingly with the brevity of the brilliance of a Spanish golden age that only began in his generation, and did not last out the seventeenth century—is perhaps traceable to a Basque tradition and éthos that are the most obvious points of unlikeness between Saint Ignatius and his great Castilian contemporaries.

a hundred years back, in 1837, as a stroke in the conflict between a Liberal Government at Madrid and a Carlist insurrectionary movement in the North. In the course of the intervening century the Catholic Church in Spain—or, more accurately speaking, certain Catholic corporations and institutions—had become wealthy once more; but this new wealth was mostly invested, not in the ownership of land, but in shares in capitalistic enterprises. It was also most unevenly distributed within the body ecclesiastic. The village priests were apt to be as poor as their peasant parishioners. The Church's wealth in movable property was concentrated in a few hands; and this concentration evoked resentment rather because of the social power which it automatically carried with it than because of any flagrant evidence that the wealth itself was being put to anti-social uses. This further charge was, of course, also brought against the Spanish Church at this time by its anti-clerical opponents; but on this head the Church seems—as far as an outsider is competent to pass any judgment on a controversial and complicated Spanish domestic question—to have been in a position to put up a convincing defence. The very fact, however, that the Church in Spain was being perpetually assailed by Spanish anti-clericals with charges which were not abandoned even when they could not be substantiated, testifies to the existence of an anti-clerical feeling which itself requires explanation. When we search for the cause of an animus which declared itself in this invincible desire to denigrate, we may find the explanation in the fact that the immense social power which the Church unquestionably did possess in Spain was largely exerted—and this in the field of politics as well as in that of education—for the purpose of opposing the invasion of Spain by the modern Western spirit. The Church was, indeed, the head and front of this opposition; and the fact that a Spanish Liberal or Socialist might be, and remain, a devout Catholic by no means insured him against the risk of being visited with the Church's displeasure and with the serious material penalties which that displeasure might entail. This was perhaps one cause of the anti-clericalism that burst out with such virulence in and after the Spanish Revolution of 1931.

This is, of course, only another way of saying that in 1936 the state of the Catholic Church in Spain, outside the industrial areas in the Three Basque Provinces,¹ was no exception to the rule that

¹ In Catalonia, as well as in the Basque Provinces, the Church had shown itself sympathetic towards the cult of a regional particularism. It was one of the principles of the Church that the priesthood should communicate with its flock in the local mother-tongue, whatever that might be, and the Church

the Spain of this date was still living in the atmosphere of the Western World of the seventeenth century. And this, in turn, meant that it was impossible for any modern Western ideas or institutions to strike root in Spain without being either travestied or transmuted. One essential element in the modern Western spirit was a prosaic, matter-of-fact pursuit of material comfort at the price of compromise in the realm of ideals and principles; and this spirit of 'enlightened self-interest' and 'above all no enthusiasm', which had entered into its kingdom in England after the Glorious Revolution of A.D. 1688, had never ceased to be anathema in Castile. While the modern Western bourgeois wrote off Don Quixote as a mere figure of fun who could not be taken seriously, the Castilian despised the bourgeois as a man who had perpetrated in cold blood the odious bargain of selling his soul for the sake of living like the beasts that perish. And the modern Western 'ideologies' that attempted to leap this moral barrier had to disguise or transform themselves *en passage* if they were to secure any foothold on the Spanish side of the Pyrenees (which Louis XIV had not, after all, succeeded in abolishing).

In the social climate of the Peninsula a genuinely Western bourgeois Nationalism flourished only in Catalonia and a genuinely Western working-class Socialism only in the Three Basque Provinces and Asturias. The Anglo-French Liberalism which a Castilian intelligentsia did its best to embrace in and after the time when Spain was engulfed in the General War of 1792-1815, came—in consequence of that attitude of the Church which has been indicated above—to be surcharged with a stamp of anti-clericalism; and the Spanish Liberal was powerless to prevent this association of ideas, for even if he remained a devout Catholic in his own heart, his Liberalism would warrant him an anti-clerical in the eyes of his countrymen. Again, the Socialism of an orthodox West and Central European pattern, which acclimatized itself in the North in and after the troubles of 1868-74, was challenged in the Peninsula by an Anarcho-Syndicalism which was in tune with the anarchist ideas of the Russian Bakunin

had in fact done more than any other agency to keep alive the Catalan language, literature and culture during the age, extending from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century, when these had been at their lowest ebb (see p. 25, below). A number of eminent Catalan men of letters had been clerics; and, even in the political field, the clergy had been a mainstay of Señor Cambó's conservative nationalist Lliga Regionalista (see p. 28, below). But while the Church in Spain could thus go far in showing sympathy towards a regionalism of a traditional kind, it easily took alarm at anything which savoured of modernism; and it began to look askance at Catalan Nationalism when the latter took a radical, and even revolutionary, turn that was not taken by the regionalism of the Three Basque Provinces.

and with the syndicalist ideas of the Frenchman Sorel, but which had made an independent discovery of each of these two 'ideologies', and had blended them into a distinctively Spanish movement that had more affinity with its non-Western Russian than with its Western French source.¹ In Spain, a peasantry that had been brought up on a tradition of insurgency against a dominant minority, from whom they were morally alienated, did not change their *éthos* and temper upon leaving the field for the factory. These *ci-devant* peasant Spanish factory hands came into the modern Western World without coming to be of it.

Anarchism is a religious movement in a sense profoundly different from the sense in which that is true of the labour movements of the progressive countries. Anarchism does not believe in the creation of a new world through the improvement of the material conditions of the lower classes, but in the creation of a new world out of the moral resurrection of those classes which have not yet been contaminated by the spirit of mammon and greed.²

It will be seen that this Anarchism was a movement of the same native Spanish mettle as the Carlism which found its stronghold in the Kingdom of Navarre, where a peasantry nursed in the same Quixotic traditions had remained undisturbed on the land under medieval conditions instead of having been herded into the factories of Barcelona and Bilbao. These two intrinsically Spanish movements, which were violently opposed to one another and were indeed at opposite poles of the Spanish political gamut, were nevertheless akin to one another in their militancy, their 'other-worldliness' and their anti-Westernism. Their mutual affinity presented a paradoxical contrast to the antipathy between Spanish Anarchism and the contemporary Trans-Pyrenean Socialism or between Spanish Carlism and the contemporary Trans-Pyrenean Conservatism.

The fate of the older imports of Trans-Pyrenean 'ideologies' which had been either transformed into or ousted by movements of a native Spanish complexion throws some light upon the possible destiny, in Spain, of two younger foreign 'ideologies' which elbowed their way into the Spanish arena on the eve of the outbreak of war in 1936. A twentieth-century Communism and Fascism were, perhaps, morally not so remote from a seventeenth-century Spanish *éthos* as were a nineteenth-century Liberalism and Socialism; for, from a modern Western standpoint, both these two latest ebullitions of Western temper were retrogressive, and in both cases the retrogres-

¹ See Borkenau, *op. cit.*, pp. 14-21 and 28-37.

² Borkenau, *op. cit.*, p. 38.

sion took the form of a relapse into paths of violence and a fanatical readiness to sacrifice material comfort to non-material aims. These features were calculated to commend the two ultra-modern Western 'ideologies' to Spanish recipients as strongly as they condemned them in the sight of old-fashioned Western Liberals or Socialists of the orthodox school; and Communism had the additional recommendation of having been passed through a de-Westernizing Russian filter before being transmitted to Spain. Nevertheless, it seemed unlikely at the time of writing that Fascism would have any more chance of permanently wresting the ascendancy from Carlism in the Spanish Nationalist camp than Communism would have of dominating Anarcho-Syndicalism in the ranks of the supporters of the Spanish Government.

In this preliminary survey of features in the Spanish landscape we have still to take note of the local differences between one region of the Peninsula and another. There was a physical difference between the bleakness of a central plateau and the fertility of a fringe of coastal lowlands.¹ There was the linguistic difference² between a solid Castilian-speaking core of the Peninsula and a polyglot border in which Catalan and Valencian were spoken along the Eastern sea-board from the Pyrenees to Cape Palos, Portuguese along the Western sea-board from Galicia to Algarve, and Basque round the head of the Bay of Biscay.³ And there were further local idiosyncrasies which were none the less clearly marked for having no counterparts on either the linguistic or the physiographical map. The Navarrese, for example, were a mainly Castilian-speaking people⁴ of the central plateau who had a distinctively non-Castilian character and consciousness of their own. The Portuguese-speaking population of the west coast was divided politically into a larger section inhabit-

¹ In this respect there was a striking similarity between the physiography of the Iberian and that of the Anatolian Peninsula.

² See the linguistic map of the Iberian Peninsula in W. J. Entwistle, *The Spanish Language* (London, 1936, Faber).

³ The linguistic map of the Iberian Peninsula may be compared instructively with those of France and China, with the Spanish rôle of the Castilian language being played in France by the *Langue d'Oïl* and in China by the Mandarin dialect, while the border languages of the Peninsula have their counterparts in the Breton-, Basque-, Provençal-, Alsatian- and Flemish-speaking patches of France and in the south-eastern dialects of China, from Kiangsu to Kwangsi inclusive. Equally instructive is the psychological difference beneath the cartographical similarity. Whereas in the Peninsula the aggressiveness of Castilian had aroused the speakers of the border-languages to resist its spread, in both France and China the central language had won acceptance in the border districts as a welcome *lingua franca*.

⁴ A minority of the people of Navarre still spoke their ancestral Basque (see p. 38, below).

ing the historic Kingdom of Portugal which, alone among all the medieval states of the Peninsula, had successfully thwarted the ambition of a Castilian imperialism to incorporate all the non-Castilian parts of the Peninsula into a united Kingdom of Spain under a Castilian ascendancy, and a smaller section inhabiting the Spanish Province of Galicia which was less particularist-minded not only than Portugal, but even than the Three Basque Provinces or Catalonia. The Galician crofters were far less inclined to self-assertion than their next-door neighbours the Asturian miners, though these belonged linguistically to the Castilian-speaking and not to the Portuguese-speaking family. The combativeness of the Asturians was matched by that of the Navarrese, who threw themselves into Carlism with the same ardour that the Asturians showed in the cause of Socialism. The Quixotic Catholicism of Navarre was poles apart from the equally devout industrial Catholicism of the Three Basque Provinces which lay between Navarre and Asturias.¹ The Castilian-speaking Aragonese, who flanked the Navarrese on the east, were inclined to make common cause with the Central Government at Madrid against the bourgeois Nationalism of Aragon's own eastern neighbour Catalonia. This Catalan Nationalism was not shared by the Catalan-speaking inhabitants of the Balearic Islands, who apparently preferred the rule of Madrid to that of Catalonia.² Finally, the Castilian-speaking highlanders of the North had their antithesis in the Castilian-speaking lowlanders of the South—particularly the Murcians and the Andalusians. Andalusia and Murcia were, so to speak, the Naples and Sicily of the Iberian Peninsula. Here the bounty of Nature was provocatively stultified by the perversity of Man. In a genial climate and on a fertile soil, peasants here lived in penury on the vast estates of absentee landlords. These southern lowlands were hotbeds of the Anarchism which found its urban citadel in the working-class quarters of Barcelona (whose slum-dwellers were partly recruited from the backward, ill-used and revolutionary-minded agricultural South).³

This vast regional diversity gave play in the Peninsula for furious—though, up to date, inconclusive—combats between a Castilian

¹ In the non-industrialized districts in the Three Basque Provinces, an ethos of the Navarrese temper was still prevalent.

² As the virtually Portuguese-speaking Galicians preferred the rule of Madrid to that of Lisbon, and as the Basque-speaking minority of the Navarrese dissociated themselves from their Basque-speaking neighbours in the Three Provinces (see p. 40, below).

³ See also footnote on p. 31, below. Catalonia and Aragon appear, however, to have provided most of the Anarcho-Syndicalist leaders in Barcelona and also a considerable proportion of the rank and file.

centralism and an anti-Castilian regionalism,¹ and this geographical quarrel interwove itself, in an intricate political pattern, with the simultaneous conflict of 'ideologues'.

(ii) Some Landmarks on the Spanish Road to the Outbreak of War in 1936

Since the close of the seventeenth century Spain had been trying to live on the threshold of the modern Western World as a medieval 'hermit kingdom'. Considering the vitality of her modern neighbours throughout these two hundred and fifty years, it was virtually impossible that Spain should be left alone; and considering the obduracy with which Don Quixote insisted upon holding aloof from these neighbours and standing fast in the stance of his medieval forbears, it was also hardly possible that he should be shaken out of this fixed posture except by man force. The crudest form of force is war, and Spain was not the only hermit kingdom to have breaches blown in its hermitage walls by foreign cannon. Turkey, for instance, was gradually shaken out of a similar paralysis by the successive wars of 1768-74 and 1875-8 and 1911-22; China by the successive wars of 1840-2 and 1857-60 and 1894 and 1931-3 and 1937. There was a corresponding military prelude to the explosion in Spain. The effect, on Spanish life, of the wars of 1704-14 and 1807-14 has been touched upon already;² and in Spanish history the Sino-Japanese War of 1894 also had its counterpart in the Spanish-American War of 1898.

Defeat in war is apt to react upon a hermit kingdom in two ways. The experience of being ignominiously defeated by foreigners who have previously been looked down upon as semi-barbarians gives a shock to the whole people, since this is a humiliation that is felt poignantly by the simplest and most ignorant soldier or peasant.

¹ The idea of transforming a centralized and Castilianized Spain into a federation of autonomous regions seems to have gained currency during the troubles of 1868-74 (see E. A. Peers, *Catalonia Infeliz* (London, 1937, Methuen), pp. 123-7). This regional feeling had, however, medieval roots. It was, in fact, a survival from an age in which the conception of 'Spain' had not yet taken shape. This conception had originated in Castile; yet the Castilian feeling was of the same provincial kind as the regional feeling which was at loggerheads with it in the non-Castilian provinces of the Peninsula. The substantial difference was that Castile, being the largest, strongest and most central province in the Peninsula, was able to conceive and pursue the ambition of indulging its provincial patriotism by subordinating all the other provinces to itself, whereas the latter, being weak and on the defensive, were content if they could preserve their own local individuality without attempting to trespass upon the domains of their neighbours.

² See pp. 2-3, above.

The same experience impels the Government of the defeated hermit kingdom to break with its own traditions and prejudices at least to the extent of trying to build up a new model army which will be capable of more or less holding its own against the foreign aggressor by successfully mastering his technique. But foreign military technique can hardly be learnt without acquiring in the process at least some tincture of foreign social ideas; and therefore, in a country in the plight of Spain on the eve of the outbreak of war in 1936, a corps of partly modernized or Westernized military officers is likely to play a rôle in politics, and this rôle is likely to be revolutionary because these native apprentices to a foreign technique will be carriers of the ideas of the foreign world in which they have been learning their trade, and these ideas—whether they happen to be enlightened or benighted, liberal or authoritarian—will play havoc with the petrified political tradition of the hermit kingdom. This historical ‘law’ is exemplified in the rôle played by the Spanish Army in Spanish life during the hundred years or so ending in the year 1936.¹ It is true that, even by the end of this period, the modernization of the Spanish corps of officers had only gone skin-deep.² The thoroughly modernized military families that produced a Primo de Rivera and a Franco were still exceptional, and the former, at any rate, of these two Spanish military dictators had to pay for being ahead of his brother-officers by falling foul of them.³ In the war that broke out in 1936, as in previous wars for a century past, the Trans-Pyrenean observers and participants were astonished at the Spanish professional soldiers’ extreme lack of education, training and technical competence.⁴ But in the realm of the blind the one-eyed man is king; and,

¹ The first case of intervention by the Spanish Army in the domestic politics of Spain occurred in 1820.

² Not only so, but, to judge by the spirit and aims of the Spanish Army’s intervention in domestic politics in the twentieth century, as compared with its intervention in the nineteenth century, the Army had latterly been becoming less an instrument of modernization and more an instrument of reaction, like the Church. One reason for this was that, after the loss of almost the last remnants of the Spanish colonial empire in the Spanish-American War of 1898, the Army had lost its principle *raison d’être*, while the corps of officers had become a closed corporation, disproportionately numerous by comparison with the rank and file, and more and more closely bent upon preserving its own no longer defensible privileges against reforming efforts to bring it under civil control, reduce its numbers and enhance its efficiency. The Army’s performance in the Rifi War (see the *Survey for 1925*, vol. i, pp. 114 *segq.*) had done nothing to restore its prestige or popularity in the eyes of the rest of the nation.

³ See p. 13, below.

⁴ The exception which proved the rule was the Spanish Air Force. This was the least unmodern arm of the Spanish armed forces; and in the summer

in contrast to the Church, which incorporated Spain's impenitently medieval spirit, the Army provided a channel—or a gun-barrel¹—along which the exotic forces of Western Civilization could discharge themselves against the curtain-walls of the medieval Spanish citadel with an explosive violence. On this criterion the Dictatorship of the Marqués de Estella, General Primo de Rivera (13th September, 1923—28th January, 1930),² must be classed with the 'Liberal' military insurrection of General Prim in 1868.

This Spanish military Dictatorship of the 'post-war' period pursued the same end by the same means as its contemporary counterpart in Turkey. The end in view was to goad a country that lagged far behind the Western World in the peculiarly Western field of material efficiency into catching up with the vanguard of the Western column of route; the means employed was to dragoon the people at large by subjecting them to a kind of military discipline. In his six years' tenure of power General Primo achieved certain material successes that were comparable to President Kemāl Ataturk's. Like the Macedonian Ghazi, the Andalusian Marquis equipped his country with modern means of communication; and he also imposed a Spanish peace upon the long recalcitrant tribesmen in the Spanish Zone of Morocco,³ as Ataturk imposed a Turkish peace upon the long recalcitrant tribesmen in the Turkish slice of Kurdistan.⁴ If Primo fell by the way while Ataturk went on from strength to strength, this difference in the outcome of the Spanish and Turkish Dictators' respective careers is perhaps partly to be explained by differences of personal character and partly by differences of national experience. While Ataturk was presented with a Turkish nation that had been broken in by eleven years of disastrous warfare in which it had seen its very existence threatened in the heart of its own homeland, Primo had to deal with a Spanish nation which had been spared the ordeal of war (apart from a 'colonial war' in Morocco) since 1898, and which had drawn the profits of a neutral during the General War

of 1936, when the rest of the professional Army followed General Franco's call to insurrection, the Air Force remained faithful for the most part to the Government of the Left.

¹ The simile of the gun-barrel is, perhaps, doubly apt; for the power of the Spanish Army was due, not merely to its tincture of modernization in a still medieval environment, but also to its cohesion and solidity in a society in which most other institutions were far gone in disintegration.

² For discussions of the significance, the services and the failure of this Spanish military dictatorship see Borkenau, *op. cit.*, pp. 40–6, and E. A. Peers, *The Spanish Tragedy* (London, 1936, Methuen), pp. 1–12.

³ See the *Survey for 1925*, vol. i, pp. 151–63.

⁴ See *op. cit.*, vol. i, pp. 507–11; the *Survey for 1928*, pp. 372–3.

of 1914–18. Again, Ataturk's saturnine temperament was better suited to a Dictator's task than Primo's unlucky combination of an Andalusian effusiveness, which raised his interlocutors' hopes to a fantastic pinnacle, with a Castilian provocativeness that gratuitously slapped them in the face the moment after. Primo recklessly quarrelled not only with the intelligentsia of Madrid and the bourgeoisie of Catalonia, but eventually even with his own brother-officers; and the fact that these quarrels were wanton made them all the more damaging to their author. This light-minded and transient military Dictator did not pass, however, without leaving his mark on history; for in setting his countrymen by the ears he set in motion social forces that were far more formidable than his own flightiness. In jauntily scratching the surface of Spanish life he contrived, all unintentionally and unconsciously, to stir the depths; and to this extent he was responsible for the eruption of the Spanish volcano which followed his resignation on the 28th January, 1930, and his death (he was *felix opportunitate*) on the 16th March of the same year.

The domestic history of Spain during the six and a half years that elapsed between the fall of the Dictatorship and the outbreak of war in Spain in the summer of 1936 displays a rhythmic movement of lapses into and rallies from and relapses into violence. The spasms came and went and returned with greater vehemence until at last the Spanish people fell into the throes of a suicidal frenzy. The prelude to this final catastrophe fell into five bouts.¹ There was a bout of inertia lasting from the fall of the Dictator in January 1930 to the fall of the King in April 1931; a bout of optimism lasting from the establishment of the Republic at that juncture down to the close of that calendar year; a bout of radicalism lasting from the end of 1931 to the general election of November 1933; a bout of reaction lasting from that change of political temperature to the equally abrupt change at the general election of February 1936; and lastly a bout of hysteria in which the mutterings of demonic forces swelled crescendo into a roar during the five months that passed before the volcano at last erupted in July 1936.

The conduct of Spaniards of all parties and walks in life during these ominous years would seem to show that Primo's temperament was a revealing caricature of the Spanish national character. On all hands and at all stages there was the same proneness to look for trouble, to neglect to open safety-valves, to express grievances by

¹ The writer of this *Survey* is here following Professor Peers's punctuation of the story in *The Spanish Tragedy*.

resorting to physical force, and to retort to such outbreaks by repression untempered with redress. Instead of setting itself, in its first flush of success, to solve the agrarian problem, the Republic settled down to the diversion of baiting the Church,¹ and this perversity had a multitude of untoward consequences. While a timorous Church was goaded into hostility by wanton attacks that confirmed its worst fears, a peasantry which had always been prone to shed blood² was exasperated by neglect into resorting to its habitual remedy of taking the law into its own hands. In the subsequent reactionary chapter of the story, the Right took their revenge by provocatively setting themselves to undo everything that the Left had done. And all parties in turn, at different stages, resorted to the violence that was the *ultima ratio Hispanorum*, as though they had conspired to demonstrate that Spaniards had no use, as well as no capacity, for the maintenance of a Trans-Pyrenean bourgeois parliamentary King's Peace.

It remains to sketch in outline the course of events from the fall of the Dictatorship in Spain to the outbreak of the war.³

The first note of violence was struck by a sporadic outcrop of strikes in the summer and autumn of 1930. During the summer a Revolutionary Committee was formed by leading Republicans, and

¹ Borkenau, *op. cit.*, pp. 47-9.

² This ancient native tradition of violence among the Iberian peasantry was probably more accountable than any new-fangled revolutionary doctrine for the peasant outbreaks during the revolutionary period under review. There were, no doubt, some rural districts—e.g. the Province of Ciudad Real, on the Andalusian border of New Castile—in which the Revolution had struck root among the country people themselves; but for the most part the peasantry appear to have been indifferent, so long as they were left to themselves, to the political conflict that was rending the urban population. The church burnings, murders of 'caciques', and seizures of land in the country-side after the outbreak of the civil war seem to have been perpetrated largely on the initiative of militia that went out into the country districts from the towns, and the degree of the violence locally employed seems often to have had more to do with the politics of these intruders than with the local state of the agrarian problem. For instance, in Castile, where the agrarian problem was acute, the agrarian outrages were relatively mild because the local urban militia was mainly composed of Socialists, whereas in Catalonia, where the militia was mainly composed of Anarcho-Syndicalists, the agrarian outrages were worse, in spite of the fact that the agrarian situation in itself was not so bad in Catalonia.

³ In the present chapter the local affairs of Catalonia and the Three Basque Provinces are only touched upon as far as has seemed necessary for exploring the general course of events in Spain. One of the features of the period of Spanish history that is here under review was a partial achievement of Catalan and Basque hopes of attaining regional autonomy, and accordingly it has seemed convenient to deal with Catalan and Basque affairs in separate chapters, in which the current events are set against their local historical backgrounds.

on the 17th August this committee met leading Catalan Nationalists at San Sebastián and drew up a pact binding the Catalonians to work for the Republic and the Republicans to promote Catalan autonomy.¹ After the reopening of the universities in October 1930 there were riots of students, and these academic alarums were followed in their turn on the 12th December by a military revolt, which was the first and only stroke in an abortive Republican revolution, in the sub-Pyrenean Aragonese town of Jaca.² Thereupon, the authorities made their counter-bid in the auction of violence by shooting two of the ringleaders of the Jaca revolt. The Revolutionary Committee made a verbal retort in a flamboyant manifesto; and the Government had to pay for their excess of severity by reprieving, in March 1931, first the remainder of the Jaca prisoners and second those members of the Revolutionary Committee who, on account of the manifesto, had been arrested and put on trial.

On the same rebound, the municipal elections of April 1931 went in favour of the Republic in the towns; and on the 14th of that month, without waiting for the Monarchist vote to record itself in the country-side, King Alfonso withdrew,³ without abdicating, from Madrid and from Spain. On the 15th the Revolutionary Committee found themselves in office in Madrid⁴ as a Republican Government with Don Niceto Alcalá Zamora as Prime Minister.

This remarkably peaceful revolution had a no less remarkably violent aftermath. Before the Republic was a month old there had been an outbreak of incendiarism, with Monarchist newspaper offices, convents and churches as its tinder, in Madrid and in the Southern Provinces (Andalusia, Granada, Murcia, Valencia). Thereafter, in the parliamentary general election of May and June 1931 for the Constituent Cortes, the Left won a sweeping victory, and the tide

¹ See Peers, *The Spanish Tragedy*, p. 13; *Catalonia Infeliz*, pp. 188-9.

² A brother of General Franco was involved in this Republican conspiracy. He was an officer in the Spanish Air Force who had won fame and popularity by a Trans-Atlantic flight. He seems to have gained over his comrades at the military aerodrome of Cuatro Vientos, outside Madrid, where he was stationed at the time, and, simultaneously with the mutiny at Jaca, he actually went up aloft—with the intention, it was said, of bombing the Royal Palace at Madrid—only to come down to earth again *re infecta*, whereupon he was first arrested and then reprieved.

³ One of the deciding factors was said to have been the refusal of General Sanjurjo, who was at that time in command of the Guardia Civil, to allow the Guardia to be brought into action against the Republican movement. It is noteworthy that in 1931 not only General Sanjurjo but also General Franco and a number of distinguished soldiers who were to be General Franco's leading accomplices in 1936—e.g. Generals Mola, Cabanellas and Goded—were on the Republican side.

⁴ For the simultaneous revolution at Barcelona see pp. 34-5, below.

of violence momentarily ebbed while the deputies settled down to draft a Constitution in harmony with the political complexion of the Cortes.

The result of their labours was 'modern' to a degree. Democracy, religious toleration and the disestablishment of the Catholic Church, regional autonomy, women's rights (including suffrage), international morality and solidarity were all written into the text—which was an easier undertaking than to engrave any one of these Franco-British principles on the hearts of the citizens of a Spanish Republic. Suffrage and disestablishment proved to be the most contentious questions. Votes for women were voted by a small majority of progressives who took their stand on principle against a large minority who dreaded the results of adding so large a reactionary vote to a male electorate which was, itself, both ill-educated and politically inexperienced. Over the question of suppressing the Society of Jesus in Spain the Basque deputies walked out of the Chamber,¹ and Señor Alcalá Zamora's Government fell, on the 13th October, 1931. The relevant article of the Constitution was passed by the Cortes on the 14th at the instance of a new Government in which the Prime Minister was the anti-clerical spokesman, Don Manuel Azaña, and on the 9th December, 1931, the Constitution as a whole was ratified. Don Niceto Alcalá Zamora was appointed to the Presidency of the Republic, as a consolation prize, on the following day, and took office on the 11th December. Meanwhile, on the 21st October, the Cortes had passed a law for the Defence of the Republic which conferred upon the Government sweeping powers to suspend a Constitution which had not yet been enacted.²

The horizon of the newly launched republican régime was darkened on the 31st December, 1931, by an outbreak of savagery in the Estre-

¹ See also p. 40, below.

² In passing this particular piece of legislation, a Republican Cortes was—as could be seen in retrospect—virtually signing the death-warrant of the Republic; for this law was tantamount to a declaration that the new Spain was a national home for Spanish Republicans only, or at any rate for these first and foremost, and not equally for all Spaniards of all persuasions. This identification of the State with the Republican group of parties was already implicit in the proclamation of the Republic at Madrid on the 15th April, 1931, on the strength of partial returns of the results of municipal (not national) elections, and this when the votes that had still to be declared were those of the rural districts in which the bulk of the non-Republican elements in the country were to be found. In thus identifying itself with one faction, and lending itself for use as an instrument for securing that faction's ascendancy, the Spanish Republic of 1931 was falling into a political and moral error which had been one of the most signal failings of the preceding Dictatorship.

maduran village of Castilblanco, in the Province of Badajoz. The villagers quarrelled with, and murdered, the local detachment of Civil Guards, and there was an almost simultaneous clash between the same two forces in the Castilian town of Arnedo, near Calahorra, in the Province of Logroño. In January 1932 there were shootings and burnings in Bilbao, attacks on churches and on the Civil Guard at Valencia, and an abortive Anarcho-Syndicalist outbreak in the Llobregat Valley in Catalonia.¹ On the 23rd of the same month the Government contributed their quota to the mounting flood of violence by the passage of a decree (implementing Article 26 of the Constitution of the 9th December, 1931) under which the Society of Jesus was dissolved on Spanish territory and its property escheated to the State. While Señor Azaña was thus smiting the Jesuits with his left hand, his right hand was deporting, without trial, a hundred Communist insurgent prisoners from the Llobregat Valley to the Guinea Coast. The Madrid Government's most constructive action in 1932 was the passage through the Cortes of an Agrarian Law—the first part of it in July and the second part in September. This law, which had been in preparation since the early days of the Constituent Cortes, was put into operation forthwith in the central and southern provinces. It was not easy, however, to execute an inevitably complicated measure with sufficient speed to forestall the agrarian proletariat's impatience to take the land by the more familiar, and perhaps also more congenial, method of main force. Meanwhile, the tide of violence was further swollen by two tributaries from the Right: a Monarchist revolt of the 10th August, 1932, in Madrid, which was easily quelled, and a more serious insurrection on the same day in Seville under the leadership of General Sanjurjo. The General was foiled, captured, sentenced to death and reprieved; but this striking act of clemency was to some extent offset by suppressions of opposition newspapers; by purges of civil servants convicted of 'incompatibility with the régime'; and by the passage of a repressive 'Law of Confessions and Congregations' through the Cortes between October 1932 and the 17th May, 1933. One of the main effects of this law was to put a stop to the educational work of the Catholic religious orders in Spain before an effective provision had been made for replacing it. The law of the 17th May, 1933, was reluctantly signed by the President of the Republic, Señor Alcalá Zamora, on the 2nd June.

Meanwhile, in the second week of January 1933, there had been a spatter of abortive Anarchist revolts in Madrid, Barcelona, Lérida,

¹ For this outbreak in this Catalonian industrial area see p. 35, below.

Valencia and Seville, and a more sensational piece of barbarity in the Andalusian village of Casas Viejas in the Province of Cádiz. As at Castilblanco a year back, this was an affray between the villagers and the Civil Guard, but on this occasion it was the Civil Guard's turn to win the fight and to abuse the victory. By this time the animosities which Señor Azaña's Government were incurring, by their application of the Law for the Defence of the Republic and their indulgence in the wanton luxury of baiting the Left's Monarchist and Clerical bugbears, were working together against them; and in the parliamentary general election of November 1933 the Left lost heavily to both the Right and the Centre. The Radical leader Don Alejandro Lerroux took office, while a Right Wing coalition of a predominantly Clerical complexion, managed by Don José María Gil Robles, called the new Government's tune with increasing insistence.

Señor Gil Robles's aim was to nullify the results of the Azaña régime *de facto* at any rate, and as far as possible *de jure*. The consequence was a half-veiled reaction which was countered by open revolt. Señor Gil Robles crept towards office without ever quite attaining his goal,¹ and when, at the beginning of October 1934, he succeeded in overthrowing one Ministry of the Centre and lodging three members of his own group in the succeeding Ministry, he raised a storm. On the 5th October, 1934, a general strike broke out all over the country, and this turned into a trag-i-comic one day's revolution in Catalonia² and a wholly tragic nine days' civil war (5th–13th October, 1934) in Asturias between the Socialist miners and the Army. In its fury and its atrocity, this burst of fighting in the North gave a foretaste of the catastrophe of 1936. The rebound from this explosion on the Left carried the Right more than ever into the ascendant. The Government fell wholly under the influence of its Right Wing supporters; the Monarchists once again openly raised their heads; a Spanish Fascist Party made its first appearance under the leadership of a Marqués de Estella who was the late Dictator's son; and the men of the Left were dealt the same measure that they had meted to their now triumphant opponents in their own hour of power and glory. A moderate majority of the Government did, however, successfully insist upon the commutation of the death-

¹ Señor Gil Robles did, however, succeed in gaining control over the Ministry of War; and his success on this point is perhaps to be regarded as one of the trains that fired the explosion of July 1936, considering that it had been one of the principal objectives of the foregoing Azaña régime to bring the Army under civil control and to relieve the country from its military incubus.

² See pp. 36–7, below.

sentences that had been passed upon the captured ringleaders of the Asturian insurgents by the military tribunals which had tried them.

The year 1935, like the year 1931, saw a lull before a storm. Beneath a stagnant surface the witches' cauldron was once more beginning to seethe. And the parliamentary general election of February 1936 reversed the results of its predecessor—though more of the ground that the Left now regained was won at the expense of the Centre than at the expense of the Right.¹ In putting an end to the weak rule of a Centre dominated by the Right these elections threw Spain out of the frying-pan into the fire. The forces of moderation were now reduced to a degree of weakness at which they could not any longer even lamely fulfil their rôle. A Left which was determined not to be denied was now brought face to face with a Right which was no less determined not to be intimidated. And the exotic and uncongenial institution of Parliament provided no field for the resolution of these closely matched,² stubborn and rancorous Spanish forces. Behind a crumbling façade of civil government the next six months were occupied in the preliminary clashes and skirmishes of a civil war.

The failure of this third attempt³ to acclimatize in Spain the parliamentary democratic institutions of the modern Western World may be attributed to two causes, one superficial and the other fundamental. The superficial cause was the failure to build bridges on parliamentary ground between five 'distinct and rival *imperia in imperio*'—the Catholic Church, the Spanish Army, the Marxian Socialists, the Bakunino-Sorelian Anarcho-Syndicalists, and the Catalonian bourgeois Nationalists—which were already firmly entrenched in the soil of the kingdom before the fall of the Monarchy.⁴ The

¹ According to Peers, *The Spanish Tragedy*, pp. 142 and 190, the respective results of the three parliamentary general elections in Spain between the establishment of the Republic and the outbreak of war in 1936 were as follows:

	Left	Centre	Right	Total
June 1931	291	136	42	469
November 1933	99	167	207	473
February 1936	256	52	165	473

According to Mr. G. M. Gathorne-Hardy (see *International Affairs*, vol. xvi, No. 3, May-June 1937, p. 406) the total for the 1936 election was divided as follows: Left, 265; Centre, 64; Right, 144.

² According to Gathorne-Hardy (in *loc. cit.* in the preceding footnote), the Left won its absolute majority of seats in the general election of February 1936 on an absolute minority of votes (i.e. 4,356,000 votes cast for the Left as against 4,910,817 for the Centre and the Right).

³ The first attempt was that of the Liberal régime of 1812-14 at Cádiz; the second was that of the abortive First Republic which came and went during the troubles of 1868-74.

⁴ Gathorne-Hardy, *op. cit.*, pp. 407-8, citing an unpublished address on

fundamental cause of the constitutional fiasco was the seventeenth-century temper that was still dominant in the souls of a great majority of the inhabitants of all parts of the Iberian Peninsula outside Catalonia and the Three Basque Provinces.¹

The new Ministry which was formed in Madrid on the 19th February, 1936, was of a moderate complexion. Señor Azaña was the Prime Minister; his Cabinet included no Socialists; and the Ministry's first acts (e.g. towards Catalonia) were all conciliatory. This moderation, however, was of little avail, since the parliamentary régime in Spain was now a façade with no solid structure behind it. The forces of violence were, all alike, out of hand, and the nominal Government were as impotent to curb the direct action of their own political allies to the left of them as they were to restrain the militant champions of the Right from taking the law into their own hands. Either side sought to excuse its own resort to violence by pleading an inalienable natural right of self-defence; and on both sides this identical plea was difficult to rebut, since it was impossible to give any assurance that either party would be able to protect itself against the aggression of its opponents by any means short of delivering its own blow first. There was no longer in Spain any parliamentary forum from which the voice of reason could carry, or any effective public peace.

A chronicle of the official constitutional history of Spain during the five months of the year 1936 that intervened between the holding of the general election and the outbreak of the war would be hardly worth recording. For example, it made little difference to the course of events when President Alcalá Zamora was deposed by the Cortes on the 8th April, 1936, and Señor Azaña was elected in his place.² The only significant chronicle of Spanish events during those comparatively, but not yet superlatively, dreadful months would be a catalogue of acts of violence; and such a catalogue would have been as inconclusive as it would have been voluminous in the state of

'The Ideas and Facts behind the Spanish Civil War', given by Professor José Castillejo at Chatham House on the 6th October, 1936.

¹ See pp. 2 *seqq.*, above.

² Such effect as this change had was probably to weaken the forces of restraint and moderation, of which Señor Azaña was a representative; for, in being raised to the Presidency, he was being reduced to silence and impotence at the very moment when men of violence like Señor Largo Caballero—whose very names sounded like menaces in the ears of the Right—were coming to the front. The action of the new régime at Madrid was mainly negative in so far as it was at all effective. After the general election of 1936, as after that of 1933 (see p. 18, above), the new régime concentrated its efforts upon undoing the work of its predecessor, rather than upon doing anything constructive on its own account.

the historian's knowledge at the time of writing. At this time it might have been possible to tell the tale of the deeds themselves; but thick darkness still shrouded the story of their antecedents and preparations. It was not even possible in every case to be sure which side had committed a crime, and *à fortiori* not possible to discern the motive—if there was any motive at all beyond a blind impulse to gratify a Satanic passion. The main *motifs* of the pandemonium were none of them new: there was an exodus of *émigrés*; there were seizures of land; there were burnings of buildings sacred and profane; there were individual murders, extempore or premeditated, of victims who were not all of them either notable or even invidious figures, there were clashes in which whole villages and cities were involved; and there were sweeping arrests which still never seemed appreciably to diminish the number of the assassins and incendiaries who were still at large. It was in quantity rather than in quality that the crimes of these five months were distinguished from those of the preceding five years. On the 16th June, 1936, some four months after the general election and hardly one month before the outbreak of the war, Señor Gil Robles recited in the Cortes a list of outrages which he declared to have been perpetrated against the Right by the Left up to date; and the Government had no defence to make against this indictment of their administration—or, rather, of their inability to govern.¹

The competition in violence culminated in two sensational murders and a military revolt. In Madrid, on the evening of the 12th July, Lieutenant Castillo, an officer of the corps of Guardias de Asalto was shot dead, and in the small hours of the morning of the 13th, Don José Calvo Sotelo, who was now the leading politician of the Right,² was called up, arrested and carried off by a squad of police in a van. That afternoon a body that had been deposited by some police in a mor-

¹ Señor Gil Robles's list was afterwards summarized by an authoritative spokesman of the Right (the Marqués de Merry del Val, in an unpublished address given at Chatham House on the 9th February, 1937, cited by Gathorne-Hardy, *op. cit.*, p. 407), as follows:

'The churches burnt between the election of February 1936 and the assassination of Señor Calvo Sotelo were 251. 324 newspaper offices, political clubs and private houses were attacked and burnt, of which 79 were completely destroyed. 339 persons were murdered, 1,287 were wounded. Robberies were committed to the extent of 138, and there were 331 strikes.'

This list of the iniquities of the Left would require searching verification, and it would also have to be supplemented by a corresponding conspectus of the outrages—and the preparations—on the other side which had been debited to their account up to the same date in the Recording Angel's ledger.

² Señor Calvo Sotelo had inherited this position from Señor Gil Robles in consequence of the latter's personal defeat in the general election of February 1936.

tuary already in the small hours of the morning was identified as being that of the arrested man. On the 17th July, in the Spanish Zone of Morocco, the Spanish Army rose in revolt, and within the next forty-eight hours there were parallel military risings in garrison towns all over Spain.

This was 'a revolution carefully planned and skilfully organized by able military leaders on a nation-wide scale',¹ and it is not credible that it could have been improvised within four days as a reprisal for Señor Calvo Sotelo's shocking death, though it is not impossible that the date may have been slightly advanced with an eye to taking advantage of the feeling aroused by this particularly heinous crime of the Left against the Right.² Another explanation which was current on the Nationalist side after the event was that the military revolt was planned and executed in order to forestall a projected 'Red' revolution which was to have taken place at the end of July or in August with Russian support. The evidence which was forthcoming in support of this particular allegation against the Left fell far short of being convincing;³ and the imputation has rather the air of being a covert apologia. The action of General Franco and his confederates is, however, quite easy to explain in the light of events up to date, without having recourse to the hypothesis that the Left were known to be meditating a crime that would have eclipsed all their previous atrocities. Assuming, as we must, that the preparations for the military revolt had occupied some weeks, or even months, before the Nationalists eventually took the field on the 17th July, 1936, the situation almost on the morrow of the general election of the preceding February was already such as might have impelled the moving spirits in the Spanish corps of officers to decide in favour of taking up arms as soon as they could complete the arrangements for a concerted general military insurrection. A short experience of post-election conditions might well bring the forces of the Right to the conclusion that the civil government had practically lost control and that the only safety for the *bêtes noires* of an unbridled Left in a homicidally maniacal frame of mind lay in self-help through the deployment of all the physical force at their command. The military conspirators, in particular, may have been moved, in the end, to put their fortunes to the touch by a knowledge that the Government had got wind of their conspiracy and were intending to take drastic disciplinary action. For the historian, at any rate, who had no key

¹ Peers, *The Spanish Tragedy*, p. 211.

² On this point see Peers, *op. cit.*, *loc. cit.*, and Gathorne-Hardy, *op. cit.*, p. 410.

³ See p. 127 *n.*, below.

to the secrets of the Nationalist leaders' hearts and could not wait for the distant day at which their archives might be opened, this was perhaps the simplest provisional hypothesis regarding the origins and motives of the revolt.

The consequences of it are recorded in detail in another part of this volume. The immediate consequence was to put the Spanish proletariat under the heel of the Spanish Army in the districts in which the revolt was an immediate success, while in the districts where it was at least temporarily foiled there was a *levée en masse* of the working class under the separate and often rival standards of Anarcho-Syndicalism and Socialism¹ and a Communism of no less than five competing varieties.² At this stage the two foreign 'ideologies' of Communism and Fascism came to play a part in Spanish affairs out of all proportion to the relatively modest numbers of their respective Spanish adherents. The two 'ideologies' were important because they served as nuclei for crystallizing hostility. Every fighter on the Spanish Government's side could be described accurately in negative terms as an 'anti-Fascist', whichever among half-a-dozen alternative positive creeds he might happen personally to favour. Conversely General Franco's diverse host of professional soldiers and volunteers, Conservatives, Carlists and Fascists, was uniformly 'anti-Red'.³

(iii) The Rise of Catalan Nationalism and the Inauguration of Home Rule for Catalonia down to the 19th July, 1936⁴

Catalan Nationalism was based—like most other European national revivals—partly on a distinctive language, partly on historical senti-

¹ The Anarcho-Syndicalists had encouraged their followers to vote for the Popular Front in the February elections, and at a conference which they held in Saragossa in May 1936 they had decided to make offers of closer co-operation to the Socialists. In July 1936 Señor Largo Caballero was still the leader of the Unión General de Trabajadores, the Socialist trade-union organization, but the moderate Socialists, led by Don Indalecio Prieto and Don Ramón González Peña, were gaining ground in the parliamentary Socialist Party.

² The Stalinite Communist organization in Spain had about 50,000 members at the time of the outbreak of the war, and its influence on the other Popular Front organizations was not strong. (In Catalonia, however, the Socialist and Communist Parties united just after the war had begun to form a new party called the P.S.U.C., which was affiliated to the Comintern. See p. 92, below.) The Stalinite Communists were opposed by the Partido Obrero de Unificación Marxista (known for short as the P.O.U.M.). Four distinct varieties of Communism—of which the Trotskyite variety was only one—were precariously brigaded together in this anti-Stalinite Communist front. The Trotskyites were evicted from the P.O.U.M. early in 1937.

³ This point is made by Gathorne-Hardy, *op. cit.*, p. 410.

⁴ See E. A. Peers, *Catalonia Infeliz* (London, 1937, Methuen), and G. Dwelshauvers, *La Catalogne et le problème catalan* (Paris, 1926, Alcan).

ment, and partly on contemporary material issues of economics and administration.

The Catalan language was one of the three Romance languages—the other two were Castilian and Portuguese¹—which had been left in the field after the elimination of Arabic from the Iberian Peninsula; and the Catalan people had been the dominant element in the Kingdom of Aragon,² one of the three Christian ‘successor states’ which eventually emerged (after many permutations and combinations between their constituent provinces) from the ruins of the Islamic dominion in this part of the world. Catalonia, however, had a different political origin from any of the other constituent elements of these post-Islamic Peninsular Christian kingdoms. Whereas all the rest of these—including Catalonia’s own yoke-fellow, Aragon—were sprung from remnants of native Peninsular Christian communities which had survived, or re-emerged from under, the Islamic flood, Catalonia was sprung from a march of the Carolingian Empire which had been established on ground that Charlemagne had conquered from the Muslims at the turn of the eighth and ninth centuries of the Christian Era. Thus the Catalans—unlike the other Christian peoples of the Peninsula—began life as citizens of the Western *Respublica Christiana*, their language was perhaps a dialect, not of any Iberian Romance language, but of the *Langue d’Oc* that was current on the north side of the Pyrenees; and their activities reinforced the effects of history and language by bringing the Catalans into closer association with their fellow-Franks than with their Peninsular neighbours. As a seafaring people with their outlet on the Mediterranean, the Catalans had played a part only second to that of the North Italians in the maritime expansion of the Franks at the expense of the Muslims and Byzantines—a movement which had lasted from the generation before the First Crusade down to the establishment of the Ottoman Empire in the old *terres d’outre-mer* of the Levant and the opening up, by Andalusian navigators under North

¹ The domain of the Portuguese language was somewhat larger than the territory of the Portuguese state, since a dialect of Portuguese was the vernacular language of the Spanish Province of Galicia (see pp. 8–9, above). Similarly, the domain of the Catalan language was more extensive than the combined territory of the four provinces embraced in the Catalanian *Mancomunitat* (see p. 28, below), since the Catalan language itself was spoken in the Balearic Islands, while the dialect of the Province of Valencia stood to Catalan in a relation of kinship not unlike that of the Galician dialect to Portuguese.

² Aragon itself, from which this kingdom took its name, was an inland province whose people spoke a dialect akin to Castilian and had never developed a national consciousness of their own.

Italian leadership, of a new and greater overseas world beyond the Atlantic.¹

Like Northern Italy, again, Catalonia had suffered an economic eclipse during the three hundred years, from the close of the fifteenth to the close of the eighteenth century, when the Mediterranean was not a main thoroughfare of international trade; and the parallel went farther, for in both Catalonia and Northern Italy this economic adversity had been accentuated by the simultaneous loss of political freedom. In fact, both countries (by different ways but with similar consequences) had come under the political domination of Castile at about this time. In the case of Catalonia, the union with her great neighbour had been due to the accident of a royal marriage. It has often been pointed out that while, in any unification of the three Christian states which had emerged in the Peninsula by the close of the Middle Ages, Castile was bound to be the dominant partner owing to her preponderant bulk and her central position,² the permanent incorporation of Portugal in Castile would have been more natural than that of Aragon from the geographical point of view. Chance brought about the less natural combination; and Catalonia never succeeded in extricating herself from the union of 1479—in contrast to Portugal, which was not incorporated into Castile until 1581 (that is, a century later than Catalonia) and which had recovered its independence by 1641. On the other hand, an insurrection of Catalonia against Castile which broke out in 1640 was crushed in 1653; another, which was made with English and Austrian support during the War of the Spanish Succession, ended in 1714 in a systematic suppression of Catalonia's historic rights and institutions; and the progressive political subjection of Catalonia to Castile had at this stage not even an economic compensation, for the Catalans were excluded from any share in the Andalusian trade with the Indies until 1778.

The revival of Catalonia—like that of Northern Italy and of other Mediterranean countries (for example, Greece and Egypt)—began at the turn of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, when the waters of the Mediterranean were stirred by a fresh current of maritime trade and the minds of the Mediterranean peoples were re-awakened by the impact of 'the Ideas of the French Revolution'. If this new breath of life had affected all the peoples of the Peninsula simultaneously to an equal degree, it is probable that a particularist move-

¹ One of the best known works of Catalan medieval literature was *The Book of the Consulate of the Sea*: a compilation of maritime law which was translated into many Western languages (see Peers, *op. cit.*, pp. 21 and 97, and Dwelshauvers, *op. cit.*, pp. 16–17 and 61).

² See pp. 8–9, above.

ment against Spain would not have arisen in Catalonia any more than such a movement against France arose in Roussillon or in Provence. In the course of the eighteenth century, the consciousness of Catalan nationality had dwindled almost to vanishing point. In the General War of 1792–1815, the Catalans showed no sign of dissidence from the other Peninsular subjects of the Spanish Crown; and when Napoleon bid for Catalan support in 1810 by setting up a separate administration for Catalonia with Catalan and French, instead of Castilian, as its official languages, this appeal to Catalan Nationalism fell flat.¹ It happened, however, that while the Catalans were catching up with the general march of Western ideas, the Castilians were falling still farther behind,² and that while Catalonia was benefiting by the economic revival in the Mediterranean, Castile was losing the last shreds of her commercial monopoly in the Americas through the loss of her American Empire. Economically Castile was still vegetating in the atmosphere of the seventeenth century, while Catalonia was successfully passing through the Industrial Revolution. By the third quarter of the nineteenth century, the social and economic contrast between Catalonia and Castile had come to resemble the contemporary contrast between the north and south of Italy; but the political situations in the two cases were dissimilar. The North Italians, who found themselves divided politically from their southern neighbours but felt themselves capable of assimilating them and raising them to their own level, saw their national salvation in promoting Italian unity. The Catalans, who found themselves united politically to a more backward but vastly larger and—on that account only—stronger people, saw their national salvation in loosening the political tie between Catalonia and the rest of Spain. At the same time, Catalonia was becoming economically more dependent than ever before upon this unwelcome political association owing to the rapid rise of Catalonian³ industries behind a Spanish tariff-wall which gave them the rest of the kingdom as a sheltered market. In fact, the political attitude and economic relation of Catalonia towards Spain during the century ending in 1931 were not unlike the contemporary attitude and relation of Ulster towards Ireland; and during

¹ Peers, *op. cit.*, pp. 95–6.

² For the cultural and social arrest of Castilian life see pp. 3–4, above.

³ The adjective 'Catalonian' is used in this *Survey* where the reference is to the geographical area of Catalonia, while the adjective 'Catalan' is used with reference to the Catalan nation, which had ceased to be synonymous with the total population of Catalonia since the industrialization of Catalonia had drawn in a labour-force from other parts of the Peninsula (see p. 31 n., below)

the same century the Catalan city of Barcelona, by growing into a great centre of modern industry, secured a position in Spain which bore a remarkable resemblance to the position which was secured in Ireland by Belfast.¹ Barcelona had become the economic capital of Spain long before she had any prospect of becoming the political capital of an autonomous Catalonia.

Meanwhile, the Nationalism of the Catalans ran much the same course as that of other submerged European peoples.² Originally inspired by the European Romantic Movement to take an imaginative interest in their medieval past, the Catalan Nationalists gradually extended their interest to practical questions of present social and economic welfare, such as education, law, agriculture, commerce, industry and means of communication;³ and this development inevitably carried the movement on to political ground. This passage from a romantic archaism to practical politics, which was common form in the growth of national movements everywhere, was promoted in Catalonia by the fact that the last remnants of Catalonia's historic local institutions had been swept away by the Government at Madrid between the years 1833 and 1845;⁴ so that, on the political plane, the Catalans now found themselves completely disinherited. The first Catalan political programme—known as 'the Bases of Manresa' after the name of the Catalonian town in which the document was drawn up in 1892—did not demand more than a moderate instalment of a 'regionalism' which may perhaps be translated into British political terms as 'home rule'; and this demand was fortified by the precedent of the actual status of the Three Basque Provinces; for these Basque provinces, which resembled Catalonia both in their social and economic progressiveness as compared with Castile and in the local currency of a non-Castilian language,⁵ had never been deprived of the local institutions which they had inherited from the Middle Ages. In the general election of April 1907, the Catalan Regionalists captured 41 out of the 44 seats allotted in the Congress (lower house of the Cortes) at Madrid to the four Catalan provinces;⁶

¹ For a description of modern Barcelona see *The Times*, 30th September, 1924.

² See Dwelshauvers, *op. cit.*, chap. 2; Peers, *op. cit.*, chaps. 6-7.

³ This constructive effort at practical amelioration found its first field in the sphere of municipal government. Early in the twentieth century Señor Rius y Taulet, the Mayor of Barcelona, did for his own city the equivalent of what Joseph Chamberlain did for Birmingham and Lueger for Vienna.

⁴ Peers, *op. cit.*, p. 97.

⁵ The Basque language was, of course, not Romance and indeed not even Indo-European (see p. 3 n., above).

⁶ Peers, *op. cit.*, p. 150.

and their cause was favoured by the fact that a moderate party, Señor Cambó's¹ Lliga Regionalista, succeeded in gaining and keeping the upper hand. Under Señor Cambó's influence, a project for the grant of a modicum of home rule to a single authority representing all the four provinces into which Catalonia was divided under the Castilian régime was submitted to the Government at Madrid in 1911 and was incorporated in a Bill which the Government brought before the Cortes in 1912. In the Cortes the Bill was shelved after only one article had been carried;² but this article was the essential one, and eventually the Spanish Government agreed to pass the contents of it into law by special decree. The result was a Spanish Royal Decree of the 18th December, 1913, which, with many conditions and provisos, authorized 'the association of municipal councils and provincial deputations for exclusively administrative purposes'. In virtue of this decree, the four Catalan provinces formed an association or *Mancomunitat* (*magnam communitatem*) of this kind on the 6th April, 1914, and under the statutes of this institution Catalonia enjoyed some of the substance of 'home rule' until after the Marqués de Estella's *coup d'état* of the 13th September, 1923. During these nine and a half years the Catalan *Mancomunitat*, with its three administrative departments of the Interior (including education and social welfare), Public Works (including agriculture, industry and commerce) and Finance, worked energetically and achieved considerable practical results in the social and economic sphere;³ but this arrangement, which might have afforded a solution of the Catalan problem, was eventually overthrown by untoward political developments.

During the ten years ending in 1923 the Spanish Government came increasingly to fear that the *Mancomunitat* might become an instrument of separatism rather than of regionalism in the Catalan Nationalists' hands; and the Catalans did, perhaps, give some cause for this disquietude. From the outset, they organized their *Mancomunitat* on the lines of an embryonic state, with an Assembly, a Permanent Council and a President;⁴ and one of their new educational institutions was a school for training young Catalans as officials. Moreover, among the Catalans—as among many other 'submerged

¹ For Señor Cambó's attitude towards the Moroccan question in 1925 see the *Survey for 1925*, vol. i, p. 152. The Lliga had been founded in 1901 (Peers, *op. cit.*, p. 144).

² For the parliamentary antecedents of the establishment of the Catalonian *Mancomunitat* see Peers, *op. cit.*, pp. 160-2.

³ These results are reviewed in Dwelshauvers, *op. cit.*, ch. 2, sec. 3.

⁴ Dwelshauvers, *op. cit.*, pp. 90-1; Peers, *op. cit.*, p. 162.

nationalities' in Europe and the Islamic World—the consciousness of nationality was accentuated and the scope of national aspirations was enlarged by the psychological effects of the General War of 1914–18, in which the Allied Powers placed 'the rights of small nations' in the forefront of their war aims, while the more revolutionary doctrine of 'self-determination' was proclaimed by President Wilson from Washington and by the Bolsheviks from Moscow.¹ In 1918, when the Dynastic Empires had fallen or were tottering to their fall and the Central and East European nationalities which had been submerged under them were actually securing their political independence, the Catalans began to chafe at an arrangement which limited their own political horizon to the narrow range of administrative 'home rule'²—the more so because they, like the Irish, had not been subjected, as a people, to the ordeal of the War³ and therefore had not been exhausted and disillusioned by paying the price at which the peoples of Central and Eastern Europe had purchased their new liberties. The Council of the *Mancomunitat* and the Catalan deputies in the Madrid Cortes decided, in a joint session held on the 16th November, 1918, to send a commission to Madrid to lay before the Spanish Government a formal petition for full autonomy for Catalonia on the lines of the *Bases of Manresa*. This petition was duly presented on the 29th of the same month, but it was decisively rejected at Madrid, not only by the Government but by the Spanish Congress (Lower Chamber) in a debate on the 10th December, 1918, in which Señor Cambó failed to win over his Castilian colleagues; and the gulf between the views of Madrid and Barcelona was only made more apparent by the Spanish Government's counter-move of appointing an all-party committee to study the problem of regional autonomy for Spain as a whole. The *Mancomunitat* retorted by taking a referendum of the municipalities of Catalonia on its own plan; and this consultation evoked 1,046 votes in favour out of a total of 1,072.⁴ In Catalonia from this time onwards, Señor Cambó and his moderate fellow Regionalists of the *Lliga* began to lose ground to Radicals and Separatists, just as in Ireland, contemporaneously, the Nationalist Party was losing ground to Sinn Fein.

The Castilians' intransigence was a grievous error of judgment, since Catalan aspirations towards autonomy could at this stage still

¹ On this point see Peers, *op. cit.*, pp. 165–6.

² Peers, *op. cit.*, pp. 167–72.

³ Many Catalans had served during the War as volunteers in the French Army, just as many Irish Catholics, as well as Protestants, had served in the British Army.

⁴ Peers, *op. cit.*, p. 171.

easily have been reconciled with Castilian anxieties for the preservation of the integrity of Spain. Political moderation was almost forced upon the Catalan industrial bourgeoisie by their economic dependence upon their sheltered Spanish market. Señor Cambó and his party were well aware of this interdependence of politics and economics; and on that account they were almost as anxious as the Castilians were to preserve the links between Barcelona and Madrid. The rebuff which they received at Castilian hands in 1919 stimulated Catalan Nationalism and at the same time undermined the influence of the moderate Nationalists over their countrymen. In 1922 a Separatist party, the Estat Català, was founded by Colonel Francesc Macià; and in 1923 a Radical Autonomist party, the Acció Catalana, which had been brought to birth by secessions from Señor Cambó's conservative Lliga, swept the Catalonian constituencies in a Spanish general election and entered into a triple alliance with the Basque and Galician Autonomists. Thus, although the social and economic activities of the Catalan *Mancomunitat* were not brought to an end until more than a year after the Spanish *coup d'état* of the 13th September, 1923, the political relations between the Catalan Nationalists and the Spanish Government had already become strained five years before that event occurred.¹

At the beginning, it did not seem as though the *coup* would strain these relations further; for the Marqués de Estella's *pronunciamiento*—which he actually made at Barcelona, since he happened to be Captain-General there at the time—was not only well received by the Catalan Nationalists but positively aroused great expectations among them. During his Captain-Generalship the new Spanish Dictator had gone out of his way to show respect for the Catalan language, and this led the Catalans to expect that the new régime at Madrid would be less, and not more, unfavourable to their national aspirations than the old. These expectations were confirmed by some cordial remarks which the new Dictator uttered on the morrow of his advent to power.² At the same time the Catalan bourgeoisie welcomed the Directory's programme of social and economic reform and efficient administration, since in this sphere they were unable (for all their particularism) to disinterest themselves in the fortunes of Spain as a whole. In the first place, Spain—with her high tariff-walls and her lack of industrial development except in Catalonia and the Basque country—was, as has been noted already, the most important market for Catalan

¹ For the effect of the Spanish disasters in Morocco in increasing the discontent of the Catalans see the *Survey for 1925*, vol. i, pp. 116–17.

² Peers, *op. cit.*, pp. 177–8.

industry,¹ so that a general rise in the level of Spanish efficiency and prosperity could not fail to benefit Catalan trade. In the second place—and this consideration probably counted for more in the minds of the orderly minded and hard-working Catalan bourgeoisie—there was a social conflict in Catalonia between Capital and Labour² which cut across the national conflict between Catalan particularism and the Castilian insistence upon the political unity of Spain. Catalan Labour was dominated by an Anarcho-Syndicalist movement³ with a proclivity towards violence which was the cause of frequent disorder and even bloodshed in the streets of Barcelona; and any Spanish Government which maintained law and order in Barcelona with a firm hand would to that extent commend itself to the Catalan bourgeoisie. In this matter the expectations of the Catalan bourgeoisie were not disappointed by the Marqués de Estella, so that in one important respect the Spanish Directory gave satisfaction to the

¹ It may be noted that the industrialists of Barcelona were not without influence on the fiscal policy of the Government at Madrid. For instance, the denunciation in April 1926 of the Franco-Spanish commercial convention of 1922 (see the *Survey for 1927*, p. 148) was said to have been due to their influence, though politically these very Catalan industrialists would probably have expressed warmer sympathy for France than for Spain. On the other hand, the Catalan industrialists were reported to have been dissatisfied with a commercial treaty which the Spanish Directory concluded with Germany on the 25th July, 1924.

² At Barcelona the labour-supply was drawn not merely from Catalonia but from other parts of the Peninsula, so that this element in the population would hardly have become inspired by Catalan national feeling, even if it had not been animated by a class feeling which cut across national associations. Compare the political complications produced in Belfast by the dependence of the local industries upon a labour supply drawn to a large extent from the Catholic parts of Ireland. The Catalans could assimilate the semi-Catalan Balearic Islanders and Valencians, and even the Aragonese, who were likewise bound to them by ties of both neighbourhood and historical association. But they were baffled by the Murcians and Almerians, who were disease-ridden, illiterate, and at the same time revolutionary-minded—and this in the Iberian and not in the European vein (see Peers, *op. cit.*, pp. 217–18 and 263). The revolutionary ferment in this element of the population of Barcelona had first come to the surface about the year 1909 (Peers, *op. cit.*, p. 156); and, from that date until the establishment of the Dictatorship in 1923, the services of gunmen (*pistoleros*) had been used by all parties in Barcelona, not excluding the public authorities. The Barcelonese Anarcho-Syndicalists had no sympathy for Catalan Nationalism, which, to their taste, was tainted with the leaven of the bourgeoisie (see Peers, *op. cit.*, p. 198, and *The Times*, 12th March, 1938).

³ For the origins and *êthos* of this Spanish Anarcho-Syndicalism see pp. 6–7, above. In Catalonia it was not until 1931 that the local Anarcho-Syndicalist movement was challenged by a local Socialist movement of any importance, and even then the chief recruiting ground for Socialism was among the 'black-coated' employees of banks and commercial houses. Even as late as the close of the year 1937 Anarcho-Syndicalism probably still commanded the allegiance of a majority of the industrial workers of Catalonia.

leading element in the Catalan national movement, even after the Marqués de Estella had declared war on Catalan Nationalism.¹

Meanwhile, the good relations between the Marqués de Estella and the Catalan Nationalists did not long survive the *coup d'état* of the 13th September, 1923.² As early as the 1st January, 1924, a number of Catalan leaders were arrested for having organized pronouncements in favour of autonomy during the preceding September; and, although these prisoners were released after a week's detention, the Directory quickly took more drastic action. On the 9th January, 1924, the Marqués de Estella, on a visit to Barcelona, convened in the headquarters of the Captain-Generalate a small meeting of Catalan notables of moderate views with whom he had been in relations of personal friendship during his residence at Barcelona as Captain-General, and asked them to put their signatures to a manifesto which he had brought with him ready drafted. This document was reported to have contained not merely a renunciation of political separatism but a repudiation of 'Catalanism' in any form; and if this was so, it would not be surprising that the overture should have been a failure.³ Thereupon the Directory announced its decision to dissolve not only the provincial deputations of the four Catalan provinces but the *Mancomunitat* itself, in order to replace the elected members by its own nominees; and, notwithstanding a protest which was voted by these bodies in joint session, in vindication of the principle of election,⁴ the provincial deputations were reconstituted on

¹ While the existence of the Anarcho-Syndicalist movement in Barcelona thus served to abate the eagerness of the Catalan Nationalist bourgeoisie to sever the links between Barcelona and Madrid, the Catalan Nationalists and the Barcelonese Anarcho-Syndicalists were to some extent drawn together by the fact that they were both pursuing the same practical aim of breaking away from Madrid—as far as either party could venture to go in this direction without running the risk of playing into the other party's hands. Besides having a common enemy at Madrid, they also had one in their midst in the shape of Don Alejandro Lerroux's Radical Party, which successfully disputed with Catalan Nationalism the command over the Barcelonese working-class until 'the King of the Parallel' lost his kingdom to the younger power of Anarcho-Syndicalism. Señor Lerroux's movement was revolutionary but at the same time centralist, and, in virtue of this latter feature in its programme, it was sometimes made use of by the agents of the Madrid Ministry of the Interior as an instrument for combating both the Barcelonese Anarcho-Syndicalists and the Catalan Nationalists. For this purpose, the police did not scruple to aid and abet the gunmen (*pistoleros*) of Señor Lerroux's sect.

² See Peers, *op. cit.*, pp. 178–81.

³ The notables appear to have been collected and exhorted on the 8th January, 1924, by the Marqués de Estella's deputy in the Captain-Generalship, General Barrera. The Marquis did not resign the Captain-Generalship until later.

⁴ Text of this protest in *Le Temps*, 15th January, 1924.

the new basis with an entirely different personnel on the 21st January, 1924, and the *Mancomunitat* before the end of the month. This new *Mancomunitat* composed of the Spanish Directory's nominees appears to have cut down the activities which had been started by its elective predecessor, and in some cases even to have undone results that had been already achieved. The next step was an attack upon the Catalan language. In June 1924 a fine was imposed on 211 lawyers (including fifteen former Ministers of the Spanish Crown) who had voted for a resolution passed by the Bar Association of Barcelona refusing to publish their annual directory in Castilian instead of Catalan; and the book was ordered to be printed in Castilian within fifteen days. At the same time, proceedings were taken against a Catalan newspaper editor and against the officers of the Catalan students' society; and a laboratory of experimental psychology in the Institute of Catalan Studies at Barcelona was closed on the ground that the director—a Belgian savant, Professor Dwelshauvers, who had accepted this post on the invitation of the old *Mancomunitat*—was 'working for France and for the Sorbonne'.¹ A public protest against this act of the Directory was signed by a hundred and fifty of Professor Dwelshauvers' Catalan colleagues in the association of higher educational institutions at Barcelona which was known as the Industrial (or the New) University²—whereupon the signatories were given the choice of withdrawing their signatures or losing their positions. They chose the second alternative, with the result that the work of the University practically came to an end.³ On the 11th September, 1924, the people of Barcelona were forbidden to hold their customary annual celebration in honour of one of the heroes of the defence of the city against the Spaniards in 1714. The Catalans were even forbidden to sing their national songs,⁴ or to dance their national dance without hoisting the Spanish flag during the performance as a token of loyalty.

The crowning blow was the dissolution of the Catalan *Mancomunitat*, even in the attenuated form in which it had lingered on during the past year. This dissolution—which evoked a protest even from the president of the Directory's *Mancomunitat* of nominees—was specifically enacted in the text of a new provincial statute otherwise relating to Spain as a whole, which received the royal assent on the

¹ See Dwelshauvers, *op. cit.*, pp. 20–1.

² On this university see Dwelshauvers, *op. cit.*, p. 111.

³ Dwelshauvers, *op. cit.*, pp. 111–12. The Directory's action in this matter appears to have been criticized by part of the Castilian Press of Madrid.

⁴ It is true that 'gags' with a veiled political meaning were being introduced into these songs as a vent for public feeling.

20th March, 1925. This statute still left open a door for inter-provincial co-operation in public works or public services; but the Marqués de Estella took occasion to declare that, though he had once favoured the idea of regionalism, he had now changed his mind.

This succession of blows¹ did not break the spirit of the Catalans. In the spring of 1926 the conflict over the language in which the annual directory of the Barcelona Bar Association was to be published arose again, with the result that the Council of the Association was dissolved and its members were imprisoned and afterwards banished to remote parts of Spain. Meanwhile, other Catalan patriots had been seeking refuge abroad; and for several reasons they sought it particularly in France, which was not only an adjacent country with a long tradition of hospitality towards political refugees, but was the chief source from which, for a century past, the Catalans had been drawing the inspiration for their national renaissance.

This was the background to the Catalan conspiracy of 1926, the history of which has been recorded in the *Survey for 1927*.²

After Colonel Macià's enterprise had ended in a fiasco, the Catalans remained at least outwardly passive until the whole situation in Spain was changed by the resignation of the Marqués de Estella on the 28th January, 1930.³ Thereafter the Catalan parties of the Left were called into co-operation by their Castilian confrères, and they were represented at San Sebastián in the conference of the 17th August, 1930, at which the plans for the establishment of a Spanish Republic were drawn up.⁴ In the Spanish municipal elections of the spring of 1931, several of these parties—now combined in a coalition, under Colonel Macià's leadership, which was known thenceforth simply as 'the Left' (Esquerra)—gained as many seats in Catalonia as all the other locally competing parties put together; and upon the fall of the Monarchy Colonel Macià and his supporters found themselves in power in the Catalan provinces. On the 14th April, 1931, when in Madrid the King was giving place to the Provisional Govern-

¹ The only concession to Catalanism which appears to have been made by the Spanish Directory occurred in a re-allotment of seats in the Royal Academy of the Spanish Language, which was made in November 1926. Out of 42 seats, two were now allotted to the Catalan language and one each to the Mallorcan and Valencian dialects of Catalan, as well as two to the Basque language and two to the Portuguese dialect of Galicia. This concession was presumably made on the initiative of the President of the Academy, Señor Pidal, who was a Catalan himself. The Catalan men of letters who accepted these nominations lost favour in the sight of their Catalan fellow countrymen. In 1927, the Directory permitted an exhibition, at the Madrid National Library, of over 6,000 works which had been published in the Catalan language since 1900.

² The *Survey for 1927*, pp. 146-52.

³ See p. 13, above.

⁴ See p. 15, above.

ment of a Spanish Republic,¹ a Catalan State was proclaimed at Barcelona by Colonel Macià without opposition.² In thus promptly reasserting their national individuality the Catalans were not making any gesture of hostility towards their fellow Liberals in Madrid who had indirectly given Catalonia her opportunity to shake herself free while the Castilians were making their own revolution. At this stage the only animus that the Esquerra displayed was directed against the leader of the Lliga, Señor Cambó, who in their eyes had betrayed Catalan interests to the late reactionary Madrid régime. Colonel Macià's gesture was not interpreted either in Madrid or in Barcelona as a declaration of independence. The Esquerra did not hesitate to take part, as a matter of course, in the political life of the new Spanish Republic, and it surpassed its triumph in the municipal elections in April by winning a sweeping victory in the parliamentary general election in June. Thereafter, the country suffered some repercussions of the shocks that were already shaking the rest of Spain. On the 3rd-5th September, 1931, for example, there was a three days' general strike in Barcelona, and on the 21st-22nd January, 1932, there was a revolutionary outbreak—engineered, apparently, by Anarcho-Syndicalists with some Communist support³—in the industrial towns of the Llobregat Valley. This more serious bout of disorder was, however, promptly suppressed by the armed forces of the Spanish Republican Government;⁴ and on the whole, throughout the five years that elapsed between the Spanish municipal elections of the spring of 1931 and the parliamentary general election of February 1936, Catalonia was perceptibly quieter and more orderly than the rest of Spain. If their fortunes had not been bound up with those of the Peninsula at large, and if the population of their capital city had not been diluted by a vast influx of unskilled workers, of a different temper, from other parts of the kingdom, the Catalans would, in all probability, have settled down contentedly to enjoy their national self-government under a parliamentary democratic régime of the kind in vogue at the time in the bourgeois countries of Western Europe on the other side of the Pyrenees.

Meanwhile, a draft Statute of Autonomy for Catalonia was adopted by an overwhelming majority of the Catalonian electorate in a referendum held on the 2nd August, 1931, and was presented to the

¹ See p. 15, above.

² Colonel Macià at Barcelona anticipated the leaders of the Republican movement at Madrid by some hours, and this news from Barcelona was perhaps one of the considerations that decided the King to give way without resistance.

³ At this stage the Communists (of all factions) were still so weak in Spain as to be of little account.

⁴ See p. 17, above.

Spanish Government at Madrid by Colonel Macià on the 14th of the same month. The passage of this draft through the Cortes was not completed till the 9th September, 1932; and on its slow journey its scope was attenuated by a number of modifications which were not crucial in themselves but which annoyed the Catalans—the more so because their own original draft had been studiously moderate. Into one article, dealing with education, the non-Catalan deputies at Madrid introduced changes which provoked the Catalan deputies to walk out of the House when the vote on this article was taken. Nevertheless, there was rejoicing in Barcelona when, on the 11th September, 1932, the Catalan deputies brought the attenuated Statute home as a Spanish law which had been passed in the Cortes at Madrid by 470 votes to 338.

There was more serious friction between Catalonia and Madrid after the swing to the Right in the general election of November 1933.¹ For one thing, the revulsion was less violent in Catalonia than elsewhere, so that the national difference between the Catalan and Castilian deputies in the Cortes was now accentuated by a diversity of political temper. In June 1934 an important piece of Catalonian agrarian legislation, which had been passed by the Catalan parliament in the preceding April, was rejected as *ultra vires* by the Madrid Tribunal of Constitutional Guarantees at the instance of the Catalan Lliga, but to the indignation of the Esquerra. The resulting deadlock between the Governments at Madrid and Barcelona continued until Catalonia was overtaken by the wave of unrest that swept over Spain in the following October. On the 6th October President Companys (who had succeeded Colonel Macià, the first President of the Catalan State, after the latter's death on Christmas Day 1933) abruptly announced his assumption of 'all the functions of power in Catalonia' and proclaimed 'the Catalan State of the Federal Spanish Republic'. In the name of the Spanish Republic President Companys' Catalan 'Provisional Government' was suppressed, during the following night, by a Catalan General in command of Catalan troops in the Spanish service. And this bourgeois escapade found no support among local proletarian parties. The Socialists remained passive in Barcelona, though they were actually leading the revolt in Madrid, Asturias, and elsewhere. As for the Anarcho-Syndicalists, they ostentatiously held aloof—partly on principle,²

¹ See p. 18, above.

² It was an Anarcho-Syndicalist principle to abstain from taking part in ordinary politics. 'We are not there to replace one bourgeois government by another' was the Anarcho-Syndicalist watchword. At Barcelona on the

and partly out of rancour against the Socialists on account of the refusal of the latter to support a project for an all-Spanish proletarian insurrection which had been proposed by the Anarcho-Syndicalists in December 1933. Thereafter, the Catalan Statute of Autonomy was suspended by the Cortes at Madrid until such time as it should gradually be put into operation again by vote of the Cortes on the initiative of the Spanish Government of the day.

After President Companys' fiasco of the 6th October, 1934, as after Colonel Macià's fiasco of November 1926, Catalonia lay passive till her liberties were restored by a movement running through the whole of Spain. In the Spanish general election of the 16th February, 1936, the victory of the Popular Front in Spain as a whole was reflected in an equally sweeping victory of the Esquerra in Catalonia. Thereupon, the Madrid Tribunal of Guarantees decided that the suspension of the Catalan Statute of Autonomy after the affair of the 6th October, 1934, had been unconstitutional; the autonomous régime in Catalonia spontaneously revived; the contentious Catalonian agrarian law was re-imposed. During the five months following the general election, the portents of the coming social storm—the seizure of land, the burning of churches, the murder of notabilities, the increasing nervous tension—were as conspicuous by their absence in Catalonia as they were by their ruteness in the rest of Spain. Nevertheless Catalonia was not spared the military revolt that precipitated the Spanish Civil War. The events of the 19th July, 1936, in Barcelona, and their military and political consequences, are recorded below.¹

(iv) The Status of the Basque Provinces at the Time of the Outbreak of the War in 1936

The three historic Basque Provinces of Vizcaya, Guipúzcoa and Álava did not exactly coincide in area with the region in which the Basque language was still current at the time when war broke out in Spain in 1936. By that time, Basque had already been supplanted by Castilian on the fringes—especially the southern fringe—

6th October, 1934, the Anarcho-Syndicalists did not quite live up to their customary aloofness, but, in so far as they took a hand in the game, it was to President Companys' disadvantage. With the leave of the General in command who was suppressing President Companys' revolt, the local Anarcho-Syndicalists broadcast an address to the workers, discouraging them from striking. On the other hand, upon the outbreak of war in Spain in the summer of 1936, the Anarcho-Syndicalists broke away completely from their traditional policy by making common cause with the other parties of the Left in their resistance to the Nationalists.

¹ See pp. 49 *seqq.*, 90 *seqq.*

of the Three Provinces, while on the other hand it was still spoken in parts of Spanish Navarre as well as on the French side of the Franco-Spanish frontier.¹ The national feeling of the people of the Three Provinces—‘the Three One’ as they styled themselves in their own language—was based not so much on community of speech as on the preservation of certain common local institutions and common privileges *vis-à-vis* the Spanish Crown. The Three Basque Provinces had been united with the Castilian Crown successively between the years 1200 and 1371 without ceasing to rank collectively as ‘a land apart’ (*tierra apartada*). Their particular rights originally included even that of entering into relations on their own account with foreign Powers, and the Basque Provinces figure, as a distinct party, in the Treaty of Utrecht which terminated the War of the Spanish Succession in 1713. Internally, the Basque Provinces had developed an advanced system of provincial and municipal self-government; and these customary self-governing institutions were embodied in charters which the Kings of Navarre and Castile, and their successors the Kings of Spain, had to swear to observe upon their accession to the throne.

The people of the Three Provinces combined a devotion to their historic liberties with a devotion to the Catholic Church; and in the nineteenth century their piety cost them their privileges by impelling them to take part (with their neighbours the Navarrese, the Aragonese and the Catalans) in the unsuccessful Carlist insurrections of 1833–9 and 1872–6 against the Government at Madrid. In retribution, a victorious Spanish Government assimilated the political status of the Three Basque Provinces and Navarre to that of the rest of Spain by an act of June 1876. But, even after this, the traditional privileges that were now forfeit *de jure* were salvaged in large measure²

¹ See the figures given by B. H. Fiebiger: ‘Das Land der Basken’, in *Volk und Reich* (Berlin, May 1934), pp. 366–78. According to this German authority (*op. cit.*, p. 367), the Basque-speaking part of the population of the Three Provinces and Navarre taken together amounted to 570,000 out of 1,190,000; in the Three Provinces together the corresponding figures were 510,000 out of 850,000; in the Provinces of Vizcaya and Guipúzcoa 500,000 out of 750,000; in the third Province of Álava 10,000 out of 100,000; in Navarre 60,000 out of 340,000. These figures have to be supplemented by taking account of the fact that a considerable part of the Basque population was at this time completely bilingual. In Bilbao, San Sebastián, and other urban centres even the lower classes did not find it difficult to write, as well as speak, Castilian; and indeed the Basque language had been on the point of becoming obsolete in the urban areas when Basque Nationalism arose and infused new vitality into it. The geographical delimitation between the Basque and Castilian language-areas that has been sketched above is strictly applicable only to the rural areas.

² The salvage was by no means complete: e.g. from 1876 onwards the people

in a succession of pacts (the so-called *Concierto Económico*) that were negotiated, for terms of years, by the provincial authorities—assisted by the Basque and Navarrese senators and deputies in the Cortes at Madrid—with the Spanish Central Government. These agreed privileges included a provincial and municipal self-government which was enhanced in value by a far-reaching fiscal autonomy. The provinces were empowered to assess and collect the greater part of their own taxes¹ and to spend at their own discretion, for local purposes, the balance remaining after the remittance of a fixed annual sum to the Spanish Treasury. The Basques were by habit industrious and efficient, and they took kindly to the industrialism which struck root in their country in the course of the nineteenth century as a consequence of their trade with Great Britain and other economically progressive Western countries. In this era of industrialization, the precarious retention of their historic privileges enabled the Basques, like the Catalans, to raise themselves to a level of prosperity and culture that was markedly higher than the average in the rest of the Peninsula.²

It will be seen that, in their relations with the Castilians, the Basques had had a happier experience than the Catalans;³ and their reaction in and after the Revolution of 1931 was proportionately milder. An attempt to proclaim a Basque State under the ancient Oak of Guernica on the 17th April, 1931, was abandoned in face of opposition from the Spanish troops and police on the spot,⁴ and a draft Statute of Autonomy that was laid before the Madrid Government on the 14th June, 1931, came to nothing.⁵ After the entry into force of the new Spanish Republican Constitution of the 9th December, 1931,⁶ a fresh draft Statute of Autonomy for the Basque Provinces—including Navarre in addition to the historic three—was of the Basque Provinces were subject, on the same terms as the rest of the population of Spain, to compulsory service in the armed forces of the Spanish Crown.

¹ The Madrid Government did not completely refrain in practice from exercising the fiscal rights in the Basque Provinces which they had arrogated to themselves in 1876.

² The percentage of illiteracy was markedly lower in the Basque Provinces than in the rest of Spain (the province of Álava had the lowest figure out of all the provinces of the Kingdom). The density of population was also far above the average (of 46.7 inhabitants per square kilometre) for the whole of Spain in Vizcaya (224.1) and Guipúzcoa (160.4). On the other hand, the population figures for Álava (34.2) and Navarre (32.9) were below the average (Fiebiger, *op. cit.*, p. 367).

³ For Catalan-Castilian relations see pp. 27 *seqq.*, above.

⁴ E. A. Peers, *The Spanish Tragedy, 1930-1936* (London, 1936, Methuen), p. 111.

⁵ Fiebiger, *op. cit.*, p. 373.

⁶ See p. 16, above.

discussed in a congress held at Pamplona in June 1932, at a moment when a draft Statute of Autonomy for Catalonia was already under consideration by the Cortes at Madrid.¹ The Basques and the Navarrese saw eye to eye on the capital question of Church and State, and the Basque deputies in the Cortes at Madrid had withdrawn in protest against the passage, on the 13th October, 1931, of legislation inimical to the religious orders.² Nevertheless, at Pamplona on the 19th June, 1932, the Navarrese voted against the draft Statute of Autonomy by 123 votes to 109, while the delegates of the Three Provinces voted for it by 245 votes to 14.³ At the time, this diversity of opinion had no effect, since the draft, as adopted and adapted by the Three Provinces for application to themselves,⁴ was not passed by the Constituent Cortes at Madrid before their dissolution in the autumn of 1933. In retrospect, however, the rejection of autonomy by the Navarrese when it was embraced by the Basques proved to have been a parting of the ways of these two kindred, Catholic, and adjacent Peninsular peoples; for, upon the outbreak of the war some three years later, the Basques remained attached to the Republican Government at Madrid while the Navarrese threw themselves into the cause of the Nationalists.

In the meantime, in the interval between the Spanish general election of November 1933 and that of February 1936, there was a strain on the relations between two, at least, out of the Three Provinces and the Government at Madrid, in spite of the fact that the Madrid régime during these years was philo-Catholic by contrast to its predecessor.⁵ The truth was, of course, that this régime was reactionary in every sense; and, while it reacted against its predecessor's anti-clericalism, it was simultaneously reacting against its comparative liberalism towards non-Castilian aspirations after regional autonomy. In August 1934 the strain came to an open clash over a financial question.⁶ In the two provinces of Vizcaya and Guipúzcoa the municipal authorities took the view that certain new taxes which

¹ See p. 36, above.

² See p. 16, above.

³ See Peers, *op. cit.*, p. 112.

⁴ At Vitoria on the 6th August, 1932, a revised draft was adopted by representatives of the Three Provinces by 239 votes to 28. On the 11th November, 1932, this revised draft statute was approved by plebiscite in the Three Provinces. Out of a combined total of 489,887 electors, 411,756 voted in favour and 14,196 against, while 63,935 abstained from casting their votes. In the Province of Álava, taken by itself, the corresponding figures were an electorate of 56,056, 26,015 votes in favour, 6,695 votes against, and 23,346 abstentions (Fiebiger, *op. cit.*, p. 374). Figures rather more favourable to the Basque Nationalists' cause are given in *The Basque Country and European Peace* (London, 1938, Autonomous Government of Euzkadi), p. 5.

⁵ See p. 18, above.

⁶ Peers, *op. cit.*, pp. 153-4.

had been imposed by Madrid were incompatible with the *Concierto Económico* which had been periodically renewed, through all vicissitudes, ever since 1876. The municipalities of the two provinces accordingly decided to hold elections on the 12th August, 1934, for choosing representatives who were to be commissioned to defend the *Concierto*. The Government at Madrid proclaimed these elections illegal, and brought in reinforcements of police and troops. The elections were held all the same—whereupon a number of mayors were arrested and then released on bail. The affair subsided without lapsing into violence, but also without arriving at a settlement, and thereafter the strain grew more tense. In September 1934 all the municipal bodies in the same two provinces resigned, and demonstrations demanding full autonomy were made all over the Basque country. At the same time a Basque deputation was sent to Barcelona to discuss with the Catalan Nationalists the possibility of concerted action between the two nationalities for securing satisfaction for their respective claims against Madrid.¹

The people of the Basque Provinces were now confronted with the painful choice of renouncing the defence of their historic liberties or else making common cause, not merely with the Catalans, who were in the same dilemma, but also with the anti-clerical and revolutionary forces in the rest of Spain; and this choice came to a head during the interval between the Spanish general election of February 1936 and the outbreak of war in the following July. In this final crisis the Vizcayans and Guipuzcoans put their liberties before their religion and the Navarrese their religion before their liberties, while the Alavans hovered between two minds.²

¹ Peers, *op. cit.*, p. 159.

² The conflicting loyalties in the souls of the Basques were so near to being equally matched that General Franco (according to report) had hopes, down to the very last moment, of carrying the Basque Nationalists with him in his insurrection—as he did succeed in carrying the small group of Basque Monarchists. The Basque Nationalists' rejection of General Franco's overtures was rewarded on the 1st October, 1936, by the ratification, on the part of the Cortes of the Spanish Republic, of a Statute of Autonomy for Basque-land (Euzkadi).

PART II

THE COURSE OF THE WAR IN SPAIN

By Katharine Duff

(i) The Composition and Character of the Nationalist and Republican Armed Forces

IN training, equipment and methods of warfare the Nationalist and Republican armed forces which were engaged in fighting one another in Spain from the 18th July, 1936, onwards presented the greatest possible contrast to each other. The Nationalists could count on the two most efficient bodies of professional soldiers in the Spanish Army, namely the Moorish troops or Regulares and the Tercio or Foreign Legion—a volunteer force recruited for service in Morocco which, in spite of its name, consisted almost entirely of Spaniards. The established strength of the Regulares was about 11,000 officers and men, some 8,000 of these being natives, and that of the Tercio two legions of 2,239 officers and men each.¹ After the war began the strength of both these corps was greatly increased, and the reinforcements of foreign 'volunteers'² were incorporated into the Tercio. Most of the officers of the regular Army were also on the Nationalist side, since their natural 'anti-Red' bias was intensified by a personal and professional grudge against the Liberal Revolution of 1931, which they held responsible for the reduction of their numbers from 12,702 in 1930 to 7,228 in 1935.³ The rank and file were, however, much less useful to the Nationalists, as they were only short-service conscripts, many of whom were at heart supporters of the Popular Front. In the street fighting at Barcelona, for instance, some of the men turned against their officers and, in general, they did not take a very important part in the campaigns of the first few months. Much more valuable supporters were to be found among the militarized police, who had all served at least three years in the Army in addition to their experience of operating against law breakers and revolutionaries. Many of the 34,000 officers and men of the Guardia Civil joined the Nationalists at once, and those who remained on the Republican side frequently proved untrustworthy, but most of the 6,500 Guardias de Asalto remained loyal

¹ See the *Armament Year Book* for 1937, pp. 744-5.

² See also p. 47, below.

³ These figures refer to budgetary effectives, excluding Morocco, and are taken from the *Armament Year Book* for 1937, p. 752.

to the Republican régime, under which their corps had first been recruited in 1931.

The Nationalists were not so successful in winning over the Navy or the Air Force. Although during the first few days the latter contributed to the success of the Nationalists in Seville as well as to that of the Republicans in Barcelona, the greater part of it took the Republican side.¹ An even more serious disappointment to the Nationalists was their failure to gain complete control over the Navy, owing to a rising of the crews against their officers. Indeed, they afterwards claimed that the civil war would have been over in a few days if only they had had enough ships to bring all the troops that they needed from Morocco or to subdue towns held by Republicans along the coast. As it was, they gained possession of the battleship *España*, the cruisers *República* and *Almirante Cervera*,² a destroyer and some gunboats, together with the two new 10,000-ton cruisers *Canarias* and *Baleares* which were in dry dock at Ferrol.³ The Republicans, for their part, started the war with the battleship *Jaime Primero*, three cruisers, fifteen destroyers and at least ten submarines, but from October 1936 onwards their fleet was weaker in gun-power than that of the Nationalists. Their one battleship was damaged by air-bombing and later on put out of action by an internal explosion. The Sailors' Councils which replaced the officers were criticized for their apparent lack of initiative, but, in the circumstances, the policy of keeping their ships intact at all costs and using them only to convoy armaments and supplies was possibly the correct one. British naval officers were reported to have been of this opinion, and to have praised the new commanders' methods of handling their fleet. The Republicans were, perhaps, open to professional criticism for not making use of their submarines, but there were reports that these had not submerged for years, and the Republican command may have felt doubtful whether, if they had submerged, they would have been able to come up again.

Volunteer forces were also to play an important part in the war on both sides. The Falangists had started a private army in 1934,

¹ See also p. 52, below.

² The *República* (afterwards renamed *Navarra*) was damaged during the fighting at Cádiz and was reported never to have gone to sea again.

³ There was also a report that they had acquired two submarines which were still under construction (see H. G. Cardozo, *The March of a Nation* (London, 1937, Eyre & Spottiswoode), p. 16), but there seems to have been a good deal of doubt about this. It was generally assumed that the submarines which carried on piratical activities in the Mediterranean in the summer of 1937 had been acquired from foreign sources since the outbreak of the war (see pp. 340 *seqq.*, below).

and the Carlist Requetés, who dated from the Carlist Wars, had been reorganized about the time when the Republic was proclaimed and were reported to have had 14,000 men under arms on the first day of the war. All the Nationalist volunteers did not at first belong to these two main movements, and some of the descriptions of their 'tribal organizations' at the beginning of the war are reminiscent of the Republican militia in their picturesque chaos. Nevertheless, the Nationalists, as supporters of an authoritarian movement, were more amenable to discipline and military routine than, for instance, the Anarcho-Syndicalists, and there was no lack of officers of the regular Army to train and lead them.

With the Republicans things were very different. The militias had been in existence before the war, and in the enthusiasm of the first few days far more men joined up than could be supplied with arms. But their experiences as conscripts or as revolutionaries had taught them very little about how to carry on a war against professional soldiers, and the Republicans, unlike the Nationalists, were desperately short of officers and instructors. Moreover, many of the Republican leaders and their recruits were convinced that honour and revolutionary principles alike demanded that they should make no concessions to the 'Militarism' which they were fighting. This they held to include the usual forms of military routine and organization. At the beginning of the war many of the militia columns were raised by social or political movements such as the Anarcho-Syndicalists or by individual factories and trade unions, and some were already being made up of foreign anti-Fascists.¹ Columns of this kind often had a group loyalty which was lacking in the mixed columns made up of men belonging to different trades and different towns. Some of the more extreme Anarchist columns were reported to have taken their decisions in committee or even by mass meeting; in others, political leaders were in command while officers with military experience acted as their technical advisers. Some commands were, however, held by Army officers—for instance, on the Huesca front and in the Western Guadarrama.

The militiamen's objections to 'Militarism', added to the Spanish tendency to concentrate on the dramatic value of a situation with complete indifference to its possible consequences, produced some striking results. For instance, the Anarchists of the Durruti column, notorious for their zeal against the enemy behind the lines as well as at the front,² were said to have reacted to their first air raid not by taking cover but by jumping on to their motor-lorries and showing

¹ See also p. 48, below.

² See p. 81, below.

the bombing planes their clenched fists. During the first few months of the war, the fighting in Barcelona, Badajoz, Irún, and in the Guadarrama proved that the Republicans could fight well in towns or in wooded and mountainous country; but against a mass attack with modern weapons, particularly in open country, they often failed to use even those means of defence which lay in their power. As late as January 1937, just before the final attack on Málaga,¹ a foreign journalist asked whether any defence would be made against tanks. The militia officers either shrugged their shoulders and said that nothing was any good, or declared 'we will strangle them with our naked hands, those devilish machines'.² When the aeroplanes and tanks did actually come, the Republicans might 'go up into the Sierra'³ and play out the last act as bandits, without much interest in the strategic effects of their withdrawal; or they might simply run away in a panic. It was also on the Málaga front that a bridge carrying a vitally important main road was left unrepaired for four or five months so that traffic had to use country tracks which were impracticable in wet weather, and that convoys of ammunition were held up because the committees at Almería and Valencia could not agree as to which of them was to provide the lorries.⁴

In fact, the Nationalists who referred to the dead left behind by the retreating Republican Army as 'Abyssinians'⁵ were not very far wide of the mark as regards the Republicans' ignorance of modern methods of warfare, their lack of a unified command, and the inferiority of their equipment, especially after the Nationalists began to receive help from abroad. Their first defeats made them rather more inclined to learn how to fight and even to drill, and the Anarchists, in particular, hoped to be able to reconcile libertarianism with efficiency by the new slogan of 'organized indiscipline'. The revolutionary type of militia was, however, still hardly a match for the Nationalists and their allies except behind defences like those of Madrid, and its characteristic faults persisted even after it had begun to be transformed into a Citizen Army, as is shown by the examples taken from Málaga after six months of war, though it should be remembered that Málaga was one of the most backward and worst organized sectors of the Republican front.

All through the autumn and winter of 1936-7 plans were being made for the reorganization of the Republican armed forces. At first

¹ See p. 63.

² A. Koestler, *Spanish Testament* (London, 1937, Gollancz), pp. 191, 193.

³ *Op. cit.*, p. 191.

⁴ *Op. cit.*, pp. 186-7.

⁵ See *The Times*, 11th November, 1936.

the chief responsibility lay with Señor Largo Caballero and Señor Álvarez del Vayo, who had respectively been appointed Supreme Chief of Military Forces and General Commissioner for War on the 16th October, and who were assisted by four commissioners representing the Anarcho-Syndicalist Confederación Nacional del Trabajo, the Socialist Union General de Trabajadores and the Communist and Socialist Parties. Señor Prieto, at that time Minister for the Navy and the Air, Señor Martínez Barrio and Monsieur Rosenberg, the Russian Ambassador, also took an important share in the work. At the end of October the militia was put under the control of a committee composed of the four assistant War Commissioners, a delegate of the War Ministry and the commandant of the militia. By January 1937 men between twenty and thirty had been made liable to conscription, but this was not very strictly enforced, both because of faulty organization and because the Government did not want to call up more men than they could arm. Recruits were drafted into 'mixed brigades' consisting partly of conscripts and partly of militia volunteers, and commanded by regularly appointed officers. Discipline was introduced, uniform was more frequently worn and the flag of the Republic was beginning to replace those of the anti-Fascist organizations.

Both in behaviour and in outlook the militiamen were, in fact, becoming much more like professional soldiers,¹ while their interest in revolutionary politics was not so strong as it had been and was more and more closely controlled by the Government. Militiamen were forbidden to take an active part in politics, and the Political Commissars who served with the Republican Army after November 1936, unlike the delegates of the original militia columns, were appointed by the Government and did not lead the militia in action. It was their duty to act as a link between the officers and rank and file and to mediate between the different factions, but also (in theory at least) to discourage political discussions and to train militiamen to be soldiers rather than revolutionaries, partly by themselves showing an example of courage, efficiency and loyalty to the Republic. There were Russians and other foreigners among the Political Commissars, but the majority of them were Spaniards. Communists were particularly well qualified to hold these posts owing to their attitude towards the reorganization of the Army and to the ascendancy which their party was gaining,² and some of them had received military and political training in Russia.

¹ See Borkenau, *The Spanish Cockpit*, pp. 206-7, 215-16; also the photographs facing pp. 138, 206, 268.

² See p. 99, below.

The Central Republican Government and those groups and parties which preferred militarization and a unified command to spontaneous revolution and 'free initiative', had the advantage of Russian backing and of the financial resources of the Government based on the reserves of the Bank of Spain, worth about £90,000,000, and the private stocks of gold and valuables which they had requisitioned. Nevertheless a wide gap inevitably separated policy from achievement. Many of the existing militia columns did not at all want to renounce the revolution or to change their picturesque names of Dracula, La Pasionaria, Red Lions, and so on, for a mere regimental number, or, still worse, to be disbanded and merged in the mixed brigades. In consequence, Anarchist columns unified as 'milicias confederales' continued to exist and to attract Anarchist recruits. Early in the new year, the militia on the Huesca-Saragossa front,¹ for instance, was still rather of the old type, while the Catalan Army which guarded the coast was 'militarized' (i.e. disciplined) and was not exclusively proletarian. Even the Communists, who were so much to the fore in calling for a unified command, kept their famous 'Fifth Regiment' as an independent unit and had their own stock of arms. In fact, no party was ready to give up its private army, for fear of what the others might do, and this was a serious obstacle in the way of achieving a united command.

The question of foreign intervention in Spain is dealt with elsewhere,² but this sketch of the Nationalist and Republican forces would be incomplete without some mention of the foreign 'volunteers' who were sent to assist both sides. German and Italian air pilots, artillery officers and other specialists were placed at General Franco's disposal throughout the period under review, and at about the end of November 1936 infantry detachments also began to arrive. A great part of the German infantry seems to have been withdrawn again after a short period of service in Spain,³ but contingents of Italians were arriving in Spanish ports at frequent intervals during the first winter of the war, and it was widely believed—though not officially confirmed—that the stream continued in not greatly diminished volume after the conclusion in February 1937 of an agreement which bound Italy, like all the other members of the Non-Intervention Committee, not to despatch any more 'volunteers' to Spain.⁴ In the autumn of 1937, when the Valencia Government estimated that there were more than 100,000 Italians in Spain, the Government in Rome gave the number as 40,000.⁵

¹ See p. 62, below.

² See Part III, section (ii).

³ See p. 192, below.

⁴ See pp. 284-8, below.

⁵ See pp. 365-6, below.

On the Republican side, valuable assistance was received from Russia in the form of specialists,¹ whose numbers were variously estimated at different times at figures ranging from one to six thousand. As for the famous International Brigades, these were composed of genuine volunteers of all nationalities who offered their services to the Spanish Government from the outbreak of the war onwards.² In the early months of 1937 the Spanish Government's estimate of their strength was about 7,000, while other estimates were 30,000 or 40,000 or even more.³ During the winter of 1936-7 the International Brigades formed a separate division of the Republican Army, but by the time of the Jarama and Guadalajara battles in the spring⁴ this division had been broken up and the foreigners had been incorporated into mixed brigades which contained a high proportion of Spaniards. Eventually, the foreign volunteers came to be used less as shock troops than as a cadre round which the new Spanish Republican Army could expand.

(ii) Military Operations, 1936-7

The murder of Señor Calvo Sotelo on the 13th July, 1936, which, as has been recorded already,⁵ was the last event in the series of acts of violence which formed the prelude to the outbreak of the war in July 1936, appears to have frightened the Nationalists into putting their plans for a military revolt into operation rather earlier than they had intended. The first move was made at Melilla on the afternoon of the 17th July. By the next morning the Nationalists had gained control of Morocco and were ready to welcome General Franco, who had already overcome Republican resistance in the Canary Islands, of which he had been acting as Governor. He came to Morocco in an aeroplane which had been put at his disposal by English as well as Spanish sympathizers a few days before the murder of Señor Calvo Sotelo.⁶ On the 18th July and during the next few days military leaders in many towns on the Spanish mainland attempted to take over control from the civil authorities—in many cases with success. During the night of the 18th-19th July Señor Casares Quiroga's Government resigned;⁷ a Government formed by Señor Martínez Barrio remained in office only a few hours; and a third Cabinet, headed by Señor Giral, took over the reins on the 19th July.⁸

¹ See pp. 199, 268, below.

² See pp. 267-8, below.

³ See also p. 268 *n.*, below.

⁴ See pp. 65-6, below.

⁵ See pp. 21-2, above.

⁶ See Douglas Jerrold, *Georgian Adventure* (London, 1937, Collins), pp. 367 *segg.*

⁷ See pp. 88-9, below.

The division of the country between Nationalists and Republicans after the first few days of the war was roughly as follows. The Republicans held Madrid, where General Fanjul had waited too long before committing himself to the revolt. His troops never left their barracks, and these were stormed by the militia on the 20th July. In Barcelona, General Goded took the offensive but was defeated after fierce street fighting on the 19th-20th July in which the Catalan home-rulers of the Esquerra Party, the Guardias de Asalto, and even the Guardia Civil joined forces with the Anarchists and Socialists. Besides the whole of Catalonia, part of Aragon and the island of Minorca, the Republicans also held Valencia and Murcia. Inland, they had put down Nationalist resistance in almost the whole of New Castile and La Mancha, except for a few isolated strongholds such as the Alcázar at Toledo; and by their hold over Badajoz and Mérida they separated the Nationalist armies in the north from those in the south. The situation in Andalusia was more confused. The parts of the country round Jaen and along the coast through Almería and Málaga as far west as Ronda remained in Republican hands, and so did Huelva and the Río Tinto mining district. The Nationalists held Seville, Córdoba, Granada, Cádiz, Algeciras and La Linea, but had very little control over the surrounding country.

The chief towns occupied by the Nationalists in Northern Spain were Pamplona, Saragossa, Vitoria, Burgos, Valladolid, Salamanca, León, Coruña, Vigo and Ferrol. The Navarrese were enthusiastically on their side, and the Basques of Álava were much less anxious for home rule than those of Vizcaya and Guipúzcoa.¹ Here and in León, Old Castile, Northern Estremadura and even in North-Western Aragon, where Anarchism was believed to be particularly strong, the Nationalists seem to have established themselves with less difficulty than in Andalusia, where the country-side had to be subdued bit by bit. The situation was more confused in Galicia, where many of the peasants owned their own holdings, and it was the extreme subdivision of the land that caused unrest. Santiago and Pontevedra were right-wing centres, but there was a rather weak separatist movement and a fairly strong Anarchist movement among the peasants and in Coruña. The fact that so many Galicians had lived in America had made the traditional Spanish right-wing attitude difficult for them, but local hatreds were said to have resulted in a more thorough extermination of Republicans in Galicia than in any other part of Nationalist Spain except Andalusia and Estremadura. By their occupation of Galicia, the Nationalists gained access to the

¹ See also p. 40 n., above.

sea through several ports, including the naval base at Ferrol, and they could also obtain supplies, including war material, through Portugal.¹

On the other hand, the Republicans held the crests and northern slopes of the Cantabrian Mountains from the French frontier through the two Basque Provinces of Guipúzcoa and Vizcaya and the part of Old Castile round Santander as far as Avilés in Asturias, though the Nationalists were still holding out at Gijón and Oviedo.

At first the Republican forces continued to achieve some local successes in New Castile and La Mancha, including the capture of Albacete on the 25th July and the freeing of road and rail communications with the Mediterranean Provinces. They were not able to advance beyond the Sierra de Guadarrama, but they prevented the Nationalists from breaking through to Madrid, though the latter reached the south side of the mountains at the passes of Somosierra and the Alto de León. The Republicans also held the gap between the Sierra de Guadarrama and the Sierra de Gredos. East of the Guadarrama the front ran between Sigüenza and Medinaceli, but to the south-east, beyond the wild country round the source of the Tagus, the Nationalist occupation of Teruel formed a salient reaching within seventy miles of the coast. In the Ebro valley a Catalan column which had lightheartedly set off to attack Saragossa met with an unexpected and instructive defeat at Caspe in the last days of July. Later on, Catalan forces came once more within striking distance of Saragossa and claimed to have almost surrounded Huesca, though they were not well enough led or equipped to undertake a large-scale attack on either of these places. Indeed, on this part of the front, the war, during its early stages, seems to have been a free and easy affair, rather suggesting the Wild West, which allowed of plenty of time off for football, and in which hardly anybody's life was in danger unless he was taken prisoner or got into trouble with another faction that was supposed to be fighting on the same side.

A Catalan expeditionary force was also sent to the Balearic Islands—an adventure which was approved of both by the social revolutionary parties in Catalonia and by the Esquerra, which considered the islands to be part of the rightful territory of Catalonia. The islanders themselves do not seem to have shown much enthusiasm for Catalonia² or for social revolution. After the smaller islands of Ibiza and Formentera had been occupied without much difficulty, the commander of the expedition landed troops in Majorca on the 16th August. As it turned out, the Catalan troops made very slow progress, as the Nationalists had command of the air, and help from

¹ See pp. 208-9, 247 *seqq.*, below.

² See also p. 9, above.

the Republican fleet was only available for a short period ; and on the 4th September the new Prime Minister of the Government of the Republic,¹ Señor Largo Caballero, suddenly recalled the whole Catalan force from Majoreca, without consulting the Catalan Generalitat or Central Militia Committee, in order to strengthen the Republican forces round Madrid and in Aragon.² Both Iviza and Formentera were recaptured by the Nationalists before the end of September.

In the Three Basque Provinces the Republicans resisted an attack on Irún and San Sebastián coming from Navarre, a Nationalist garrison in San Sebastián surrendered on the 28th July, and two days later it was announced that the Republicans had advanced as far south as Tolosa. In Asturias, the last Nationalist stronghold at Gijón was not, however, taken till the 21st August. At Oviedo the Asturian miners surrounded the town, but the Nationalist force under General Aranda was just able to hold out till a relief column of Moors and Tercio arrived on the 17th October. In the South-West, Republican expeditions despatched against Granada and Córdoba interfered with communications between the Nationalist centres in Andalusia, but had no better chance of success against defended towns than had the Catalans in Aragon.

The most important developments which took place in the South-West were unquestionably to the advantage of the Nationalists. As early as the 19th July foreign legionaries and Moorish troops had been brought across from Africa to take part in the capture of Algeciras and La Linea and, by their success, had opened the door still wider for other reinforcements to follow them. Even if the Republicans could have spared enough men from the defence of Madrid or of Estremadura to make an attempt to recapture these ports, the Nationalists would still have barred their way by their hold over Seville, Córdoba and Granada. A Republican column tried to make its way along the coast from Málaga and Estepona, but was defeated at San Roque near Gibraltar. However, the Republican fleet was concentrated at Málaga, submarines were sent to patrol the Straits, and Algeciras, La Linea, Cádiz, Melilla and Ceuta were bombarded from both the sea and the air. In spite of the inexperience of the new commanders of the Republican fleet, it succeeded to a certain extent in delaying the transport of troops during the first week or two, and the success with which, on one occasion, a large force, estimated at 3,000 men, was brought across by sea, was afterwards attributed by the Nationalists to a remarkable combination of good luck and bluff on the part of General Franco.

¹ See p. 97, below.

² See p. 56, below.

It was the sudden achievement by the Nationalists of a crushing superiority over the Republicans in the air that finally gave them the command of the Straits. As early as the 27th July reinforcements were being brought from Morocco by air, and only a week later Nationalist aeroplanes were reported to be making the crossing three or four times a day. Besides troop-carriers the Nationalists had bombers and pursuit planes with which to protect their convoys, or to shepherd Republican merchantmen, particularly those suspected of carrying munitions, into Nationalist harbours. During August and September, skirmishes were continually taking place between these aeroplanes and Republican warships, with much inconvenience to neutral shipping. A Republican submarine, the *C-3*, was believed to have been sunk by a bomb, the *Jaime Primero* was damaged, and the Republicans could no longer use Málaga as a naval base. In September the naval strength of the Nationalists was increased by the ships which had been under construction or undergoing repairs at the outbreak of war; and on the 29th of that month the two cruisers *Canarias* and *Almirante Cervera* attacked the Republican patrol of two destroyers off Cape Spartel, sank one, and forced the other to take refuge at Casablanca in French Morocco. From that time onwards the Nationalists' command of the sea remained undisputed.

Not only had the Nationalists more aeroplanes at their disposal than could be accounted for by the proportion of the Spanish Air Force that had joined them, but these machines were larger and more up to date than any which had been in use in Spain before the outbreak of the war. It was not long before rumours began to circulate, and more solid evidence to accumulate, that these supplies had their provenance from Italy and Germany.¹ At the end of the second week in August a neutral observer in Seville reported that General Franco already had twenty Junker transport planes, five German chasers and seven Caproni bombers; and that Germans and Italians were already serving with his army as pilots and instructors. They wore Tercio uniform, but the Germans kept their Nazi badges. German experts were said to be training Spaniards in the use of the anti-aircraft guns which had just arrived from Germany, and both Germans and Italians were soon reported to be serving with the artillery and tank corps and to be acting as mechanics in the repair shops²

¹ For the incident of the Italian aeroplanes which made forced landings in French territory at the end of July see p. 232, below.

² See *The Daily Telegraph* of the 13th August, 1936, and *The News Chronicle* of the same date; see also A. Koestler, *Spanish Testament*, pp. 37-40.

Reinforcements of aeroplanes were welcomed by the Nationalists in the North, who had found the Republican Air Force one of the chief obstacles to their crossing the Sierra de Guadarrama. Whereas on the 4th August General Mola had admitted that the Republicans were the stronger in the air, though the weaker in artillery, less than a week later he was proudly announcing that the balance had turned in his favour. From the end of July, indeed, the Nationalists were able to take the offensive on a much larger scale on both the northern and the south-western front. The 'cleaning-up' of Andalusia took some time. Huelva was captured on the 29th July and the Rio Tinto mining district a month later, and on the 20th August communications were stated to have been restored between Seville and Granada; but the Nationalists did not gain control of the direct road between Granada and Córdoba until their capture of Alcalá la Real, which was announced on the 2nd October. Towards the end of October they occupied the Peñarroya mining district north-west of Córdoba. In the direction of Málaga they reached Bobadilla and Antequera as early as the 15th and 18th August, and they entered Ronda on the 16th September.

The strength of General Franco's small motorized force of well-trained men supported by plenty of aeroplanes was shown for the first time in the short campaign which began with the despatch of a force of 5,000 men from Seville on the 5th August. Four days later the capture of Mérida was announced, a belated relief force from Madrid was subsequently defeated with heavy losses, and contact was at last established between the armies of General Franco and General Mola. Badajoz held out for a few days longer, in spite of a revolt of the Civil Guard, but was taken by storm on the 15th August. Much discussion was afterwards aroused by reports from foreign journalists who claimed to have visited Badajoz next day and who alleged that about 1,200 Republicans had been shot and that executions were still taking place in the bull-ring.¹ The Nationalists declared that one of these journalists had disavowed the account which had been published as coming from him, and that two of the others were not regular correspondents; the supporters of the Republican cause replied by drawing attention to the strictness of the control which the Press and Propaganda Department at Sal-

¹ The first journalists to visit Badajoz were the correspondents of *Le Temps*, the Havas Agency and the United Press, together with a Portuguese correspondent. The evidence is discussed from the Nationalist and Republican points of view respectively in G. McNeill-Moss, *The Legend of Badajoz* (London, 1937, Burns, Oates & Washbourne), and in Hispanicus, *Badajoz* (London, 1937, The Friends of Spain).

manca exercised over all foreign journalists.¹ Two British army officers who entered Badajoz with the Nationalists said that there was no massacre, but much street fighting all night, and that after trials had been held there were many executions.² In any case, as the Republicans had resisted desperately up to the last moment and had had very little chance of retreat, and as it was the usual practice for both sides to kill prisoners,³ there is reason to suspect that the trials were summary and the executions numerous.

Meanwhile the situation on the Irún-San Sebastián front was also turning in the Nationalists' favour. It had been a most disagreeable surprise to them that the Basque Nationalist Party should have chosen to throw in its lot with the Popular Front in return for a promise of home rule, and that neither the offers of a large measure of autonomy made by General Cabanellas, at that time head of the Burgos Junta, on the 11th August, nor an anti-Communist appeal by the Bishops of Vitoria and Pamplona, nor even alarm at the letting loose of a social revolution, had influenced the Basques towards making a separate peace. As regards their chances of success in the war, however, the Basques laboured under special disadvantages in addition to the usual Republican lack of war material and trained soldiers. The long narrow strip of land which remained in Republican hands in the North was of an awkward shape to defend and was completely isolated from other Republican territory. Their allies the Asturians were putting all their strength into the siege of Oviedo, and, in any case, neither the Asturians nor the Basques fought as well outside their home region as within it, and there was continual friction and distrust between them. Besides the difficulty of arranging for reinforcements and supplies of food and ammunition, most of the chief towns were in danger of bombardment or blockade from the sea, and until the end of September, when part of the Republican fleet was transferred to the Bay of Biscay for about three weeks, there were no Republican warships in those waters capable of opposing the battleship and three cruisers which could operate from the Nationalist harbours in Galicia.

Inland, the Republican forces were steadily pressed back in front

¹ The inquiries into German and Italian intervention and Nationalist atrocities made by Mr. Koestler, *The News Chronicle* correspondent, cost him three months under sentence of death in Seville prison, and even the correspondent of *The Daily Mail* complained that 'every conceivable obstacle was placed in the way of the war correspondent', that his despatches were sometimes so heavily censored that he preferred not to send them at all, and that he read the whole of Boswell's *Life of Johnson* while hanging about in the ante-rooms of Salamanca (Cardozo, *March of a Nation*, pp. 221-3).

² McNeill-Moss, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

³ See p. 86.

of Irún and San Sebastián during the first weeks of the war. Tolosa was recaptured on the 11th August, and though Republican resistance stiffened during the next week or two, General Mola was now able to add Moors and soldiers of the Foreign Legion to his mixed force of Navarrese, Falangists and regulars. The Nationalist superiority in artillery and aircraft, together with the courage of the Navarrese, overcame the mountain barriers through which they had to make their way, and on the 5th September they entered Irún. In the chaos resulting from the collapse of the Republican defence at the last moment, the Anarchists burnt most of Irún rather than surrender it. At San Sebastián, on the other hand, the Basque Nationalists were determined that the town should be handed over intact, and, by fighting the Anarchists themselves, they succeeded in preventing them from doing much damage before the Republican forces were withdrawn westwards along the Bilbao road on the night of the 12th-13th September.

General Mola's army had now cut off the Republicans in the North from France, whence they might have received non-military supplies, including oil, if not war material, and the Nationalists had themselves gained several new points of access to the sea. For a time it seemed as though they would continue their offensive until they had captured Bilbao and possibly Santander as well, and that they would use the same plan of attack as at San Sebastián, where they had tempted the Republicans to flinch from standing a siege by leaving a way of escape open. Nationalist warships continued to patrol the coast, and it was announced that mines would be laid outside the harbours of Bilbao and Santander after the 17th September. Bilbao was repeatedly bombed from the air and a mutiny of the Army, Civil Guard and Assault Guards had to be put down there. After General Mola's proposals for a peaceful surrender of Bilbao had been refused by the Basque leaders, he issued an ultimatum calling upon Bilbao and Santander to surrender before the 25th September, and by the end of the month Nationalist columns were reported to be within thirty miles of Bilbao. After this, however, the Nationalists' advance petered out, possibly because they needed to save their strength for the attack on Madrid.

When once the Nationalists had occupied Badajoz and Mérida as well as Cáceres and Trujillo, the way was open for them to begin an offensive up the Tagus Valley. They hoped to be in time to relieve the defenders of the Alcázar at Toledo, but their chief objective was, of course, Madrid, the capture of which, apart from its strategic importance as the centre-point of Spain, would bring them a palpable

increase in prestige and would also, they hoped, win them general recognition from the Great Powers. The attacking force consisted of about 4,200 Legionaries and 2,000 Moors organized in two columns and strongly supported by aircraft, artillery, armoured cars and tanks. Behind these came a column of Falangists and other volunteers to do the 'cleaning up'. On this front the militia were no better organized than in Catalonia and had not even the strong group loyalty that some of the Anarchist columns were said to have inspired. The Moors' reputation, and the psychological effect—out of all proportion to the damage done—of shelling and air-raids, proved too much for the militia. The capture of Oropesa by the Nationalists was announced on the 29th August, and on the 3rd September they occupied Talavera without resistance and went on to cover thirteen of the sixty-five miles which still lay between them and Madrid.

Next day, as a result of this disaster and of the desperate situation at Irún, Señor Giral's Government resigned and was succeeded by a coalition including Socialists and Communists.¹ At first the new Premier and Minister for War, Señor Largo Caballero, seemed to be fulfilling his followers' expectations that he would extricate the Republicans from their immediate difficulties and even succeed in creating a Republican Army out of chaos. On his first day in office he ordered a rapid counter-attack on the western front which drove the Nationalists back to the outskirts of Talavera ; he recalled the Catalan expeditionary force from Majorca ; and he appointed a General Staff in the hope of inducing the semi-independent units at the front to co-operate in carrying out a unitary plan of campaign.

Nevertheless the Nationalists continued to advance, though not quite so rapidly, along the Tagus Valley and in the Sierra de Gredos. They were now engaged upon a race against time for the relief of the Alcázar. This great square fortress, the foundations, as well as the name,² of which went back to the Moors and, it is said, to the Romans, was defended by about a thousand Civil Guards, soldiers and Nationalist volunteers under the command of Colonel Moscardo. In despite of the more romantic headlines which appeared at the time, only nine of the defenders were military cadets. The garrison had with them some two hundred and fifty women and children and at least twenty Republican hostages. Several thousand militiamen had been surrounding the Alcázar since July ; and their resentment at its active resistance, and at the passive resistance of the strongly Catholic and anti-Socialist inhabitants of the town, had made Toledo

¹ See p. 97, below.

² Arabic *gasr* = Latin *castrum*.

one of the most unpleasant places in Republican Spain. The Nationalists had had to take refuge underground in the cellars ; they had run short of water and had had to eat their horses and mules ; but they had enough machine guns to prevent the militia from rushing their defences, and it was some weeks before the Republicans began to shell them.

The real danger, however, came from the mines which the Republicans could be heard driving towards the Alcázar. In July an offer had been made, in vain, through the Chilean Minister to the effect that the lives of the garrison would be spared if they surrendered and that non-combatants would be given a safe-conduct to the foreign Embassies in Madrid.¹ On the 12th September the offer was repeated and was again refused, and on the 18th the first of the mines were exploded, but the survivors fought on in the ruins for nine more days, defying all attempts to bombard or burn them out of their hiding places and refusing another offer of mediation. On the 22nd September the Nationalist relief force reached Maqueda, forty-six miles from Madrid, and then turned south-east along the Toledo road. This move would have laid their left flank dangerously open to attack if they had been dealing with a more formidable enemy than the Republicans, but they were protected on the right by the Tagus and, some distance to the rear, by their contact with General Mola's forces through the Puerto del Pico ; and the Republican attempt to cut their communications by opening the sluice gates of the River Alberche failed owing to the lowness of the water-level. Early on the morning of the 28th September General Varela's column entered Toledo, and the story of the seventy days' resistance of the Alcázar took its place as one of the most heroic episodes in the Nationalist legend of the civil war—a reputation which somewhat exaggerated its utilitarian military value.

It now seems to have been the aim of General Franco, who was raised to the position of Commander-in-Chief of the Nationalist Armies almost immediately after the relief of Toledo, to close in round Madrid by attacking on several fronts at once. On the north-east, Sigüenza was occupied early in October. In the Sierra de Guadarrama there was no great change ; but farther west the Toledo-Avila road was in the hands of the Nationalists by the 12th October, though their advance towards the Escorial was strongly resisted by a Republican force under General Mangada. Advancing eastwards from Toledo, the Nationalists cut the railway lines from Madrid to

¹ For the housing of refugees in Embassies and Legations in Madrid see pp. 388-90, below.

Ciudad Real and the Levante (i.e. the south-eastern provinces bordering on the Mediterranean) on the 17th-18th October, though they did not attack Aranjuez, which was strongly held. Meanwhile their main attacks were delivered along the net-work of roads converging on Madrid from the west, south-west and south. The fact that they took a month to cover the last thirty or forty miles was perhaps due to their having chosen to carry out the offensive in a series of rushes, alternating with pauses to consolidate their positions; but it seems also to have been true that the militia were becoming better able to resist them. Though in some places, for instance at Illescas, the Republicans were completely taken by surprise by General Varela's method of shifting his men by lorry from one end of the front to the other, their counter-attacks achieved some local successes in holding up the enemy, and they made, and defended, strongly fortified positions in towns and villages. If, however, the Nationalists were not successful in a direct attack on these defences, they forced the Republicans back by outflanking manœuvres in the open country, where their cavalry, as well as such new-fangled weapons as German and Italian aeroplanes and Italian whippet-tanks, gave them an overwhelming advantage, while the Republicans' habit of bunching together and rushing back along the main roads when in retreat often put them at the mercy of Nationalist machine-guns.

There were already signs, however, that the Nationalists' advantage might soon be reduced. In the Republican counter-attack which began on the 29th October the presence of Russian tanks was reported for the first time in a Nationalist *communiqué*, and the Republican aeroplanes were used more freely, in such a way as to suggest that reinforcements were expected. The Republicans advanced some way along the Toledo road towards Illescas, but two days later the Nationalists once more took the offensive. On the 4th November they came within seven miles of Madrid, and by the 6th they were making their way down the western slopes of the Manzanares Valley. The battle front now stretched from Villaverde on the south to Humera on the west, but there was, as yet, no regular front line, only a succession of fortified posts, which often had large gaps between them. General Franco had already made arrangements for taking over the public services of Madrid, the Falangists chosen to act as police had marched out from Avila, and lorries loaded with food were ready to follow. Street decorations are even said to have been ordered for the Nationalists' triumphal entry. Stringent regulations were also issued for the control of foreign journalists, who were only to be allowed into Madrid for a conducted tour on the day fixed by

General Franco, under threat of being treated as spies if they failed to fall in with this arrangement.

The Nationalists had hoped that, by menacing Madrid from three sides and leaving a gap open to the east and south-east, they might induce the Republicans to withdraw their army, as the Basques had withdrawn theirs from San Sebastián, in order to save the city from being destroyed. They must have been encouraged in this view when, on the 19th October, President Azaña and four of his Ministers left for Barcelona on what was described as a tour of the regions remaining loyal to the Republic. On the 5th November, the day after the Anarcho-Syndicalists joined the Government,¹ the new Cabinet appealed to anti-Fascists in every region of Spain to defend Madrid 'until the extreme sacrifice', but hardly more than a day later, during the night of the 6th-7th November, they hurriedly removed the seat of Government to Valencia, leaving the defence of Madrid to a Junta which was presided over by General Miaja, the Commander of the First Division in Madrid, and was composed of a delegate of the Government, a secretary belonging to the Socialist Party, and representatives of all the Popular Front organizations, including the moderate Republicans, the Syndicalists, both the Stalinite and the left-wing Communists, and the Libertarian and Socialist youth organizations.

There was, however, no sign that the large force of militiamen in Madrid was being withdrawn; and even if the Nationalists staked their not inexhaustible resources of man-power on forcing a way across the Manzanares, they would still not be sure of the welcome awaiting them inside the city. It was possible that the strife which had broken out in other places, Cuenca, for instance, between Anarchists and other Republican factions would spread to Madrid and that the ensuing chaos might be turned to advantage by supporters of the Nationalist cause inside the city. General Mola had, indeed, been so rash as to declare in a broadcast speech that the four columns which were marching on Madrid would be reinforced by a 'fifth column' from within.

As a matter of fact, many of these crypto-Nationalists had already been rounded up by the official police organizations, or, if they were less lucky, by the 'Dawn Patrols' of terrorists,² and, apart from spying and some shooting from a hotel during one of the early air raids, the remainder did not give much trouble. It was more likely that the Nationalists would be received in the spirit of the instructions which were issued on the 9th November by the Fifth Militia Regiment,

¹ See p. 98, below.

² See p. 82, below.

which urged that all the inhabitants of Madrid should prepare to fight at street corners, turn every house into a fortress and throw burning petrol at tanks and armoured cars, and that the 'fifth column' should be annihilated within the next few hours.

If the kernel of Madrid was likely to prove harder than its shell (as the Saragossans had boasted of their own city during the famous siege a century earlier), the Nationalists laboured under the additional disadvantage of approaching it from the most difficult side. They would have to cross the Manzanares where it ran between steep artificial embankments, and fight their way uphill from house to house and street to street against barricades and machine-gun nests. An attack from the high ground beyond the northern suburbs might have had a slightly better chance of success, but they had not yet been able to break through in the Sierra de Guadarrama or at the Escorial, and it was not until later that they concentrated their forces against the Madrid-Escorial road with the intention of crossing the Manzanares where it was more easily fordable and of working round to the north of Madrid that way.

Their first attempts to cross the Manzanares were made against the Toledo and Segovia bridges and were not successful, but on the 7th November they occupied part of the wooded park called the Casa del Campo, a little farther to the north, though still on the west bank of the river. At that moment, however, the Republicans began to receive valuable help with the arrival on the 8th November of the first three battalions of the International Brigades,¹ and on the 11th of 2,000 Catalan Anarchists led by the well-known revolutionary Buenaventura Durruti (who was killed in the Casa del Campo on the 20th November). After this, other detachments of foreign volunteers arrived, and the International Brigades were formed into a division commanded by General Kleber. Supplies of war-material were also becoming more plentiful thanks to the assistance of the Soviet Union² and of Mexico,³ and, in consequence, perhaps, of the presence of the Russian officers and technicians who were serving with the Republican forces,⁴ the fire of the Republican artillery was becoming much more accurate.

The Republican counter-attacks, however, did not succeed in freeing the outskirts of Madrid, and on the evening of the 15th November the Nationalists crossed the Manzanares near the Bridge of the French and gained a foothold in the University City. It was one of the many tragic turns of the war that these magnificent

¹ See p. 48, above.

² See pp. 199-200, below.

³ See pp. 213-14, below.

⁴ See p. 48, above, and pp. 199 and 268, below.

buildings, which had been planned in honour of King Alfonso's jubilee, and some of which were still unfinished, should now become an uncanny battlefield where books were piled up into barricades and hospitals were the scene of some of the fiercest fighting. Attacking again on the 17th November, the Nationalists reached the Clinical Hospital on the eastern edge of the University City and advanced half-way across the West Park, but they had not taken the Republican strong points at the Model Prison and the Montaña Barracks or made their way into the streets or up to the plateau of the northern suburbs. The only result of their offensive was a curiously shaped salient in the University City, and this seems to have been of very little use to them afterwards, especially as its communications were threatened on both sides by the Republicans, who still held most of the west bank of the Manzanares.

From the 21st November onwards the Nationalists were at last attacking in the direction of the Escorial road, first against Pozuelo and Humera, then farther to the west against Valdemorillo, Fresnedillas and Boadilla. Several villages changed hands during December, and in the first week of January 1937 the Nationalists drove the Republicans out of the Casa del Campo and reached the junction of the Galicia and Escorial roads at Las Rozas, and the high ground beyond Aravaca which overlooked the northern suburbs and the Republican positions round the University City. Though next week the Republicans claimed to have regained some of the lost ground, the Nationalists certainly continued to hold Aravaca and the Galicia road almost up to the point where it crossed the Manzanares, while for a time their advance posts seem to have pushed as far north as the outskirts of El Pardo.

As soon as the Nationalists' hopes of walking into Madrid unopposed had been disappointed they began to bombard it repeatedly from the air as well as from batteries placed on the ridge above the Manzanares. Up till now Madrid had suffered only two or three air raids, the most destructive of which had taken place on the 29th October, possibly as a reprisal for Republican raids on Seville, Cáceres and Granada the day before. On the other hand, on and after the 8th November (which was also the day on which the centre of Madrid was shelled for the first time) the Heinkels and Capronis began to fly over Madrid every day. Twenty-three raids took place during the rest of November, the casualties for the week of the 10th-17th November alone were estimated at about 500 killed and 1,200 wounded,¹ and many fires were started by incendiary bombs (*pace*

¹ *The Manchester Guardian*, 19th November, 1936.

the Nationalist *communiqués*, which sought to put the blame on the Anarchists) The Nationalists excused themselves on the ground that the barracks and ammunition dumps of the militia were scattered all over the city and that in any case the Republicans themselves bombed towns. If, however, they also aimed at breaking the spirit of the Madrid Republicans they succeeded no better in this than in their attacks on places of direct military value. At first the Republican air defence was helpless against the up-to-date German and Italian machines, but as early as the 9th November, 1936, a Nationalist *communiqué* announced that a fleet of remarkably fast bombers had made a surprise raid on the Cuatro Vientos aerodrome, and on the 11th or 12th they announced for the first time that a Russian tri-motor plane had been brought down. Gradually the Russian fighters and the new anti-aircraft guns gained such command of the air against attack that the number of raids fell to seven in December and two in the first ten days of January.

On the other hand, the same superiority of defence over attack worked against the Russian aeroplanes when they in their turn crossed over behind the enemy's lines and came up against the German anti-aircraft guns. The anti-tank guns of both armies also proved very effective, particularly those from Germany, and though the Russian tanks did better under siege conditions than the lighter German and Italian machines, their armour was still not a sufficient protection.

In addition to counter-attacks on the long front running from the Escorial to Aranjuez the Republicans made surprise raids on Talavera and on villages south of Toledo, and undertook small offensives during the winter in many parts of Spain in order to threaten the Nationalists' communications or to draw some of their troops away from Madrid. The Basques gained some ground in the direction of San Sebastián and in the mountains of Álava, and the Asturians renewed their efforts to surround and enter Oviedo and sent a column to invade León with the help of the local Republicans. Nowhere, however, were the militia strong enough to achieve any decisive result. Even in Aragon they won no victories round Huesca to compensate for the Catalan withdrawal from the Balearic Islands.

The Nationalists, by their occupation of these islands, had gained a most valuable line of bases from which their aeroplanes and warships could raid the Mediterranean coast towns and the railway crossing the French frontier at Port Bou. They were also reported to be concentrating troops on the islands. Indeed, the correspondent of *The Daily Telegraph* who visited Majorca in the third week in October stated that between 12,000 and 15,000 trained men were

stationed there with 150 aeroplanes, 70 of which he had himself seen. It was believed that the Nationalists were preparing to invade Catalonia from the sea, and on the 30th October an unsuccessful attempt at landing troops was actually reported to have been made from the cruiser *Canarias* at Rosas, just south of the French frontier. A month later, however, the Republican Government were convinced that the invading force would start from Ibiza and would land a little south of Valencia, whither the seat of government had now been transferred.

It was also reported that the real rulers of the Balearic Islands were not the Nationalists but the Italians; that the islands were used as a base for their aeroplanes and for the submarines which they were accused of having put at the disposal of General Franco; that they had 3,000 men stationed there and were continually landing war material; and that they directed most of the Nationalist activities, including the local volunteer force, and generally behaved as if they owned the islands.¹ Several Italian officers, including the commanding officer, Count de Rossi, left the islands during December (though Count de Rossi's place was eventually taken by another Italian, General Roatta). The expected invasion failed to come to pass—perhaps in consequence of the stand made by the French Government in the matter of German penetration in Spanish Morocco.²

Besides the attacks which the Nationalists delivered on the Madrid front during January 1937, they also renewed their offensive against Málaga, which had come to a standstill in the previous autumn.³ The Malagans, who had been short of food since the beginning, were now starving, and, when once the new offensive had begun, the air raids, against which, unlike the Madrileños, they were unable to defend themselves, became more frequent and destructive. The local commander, Colonel Villalba, an officer of the regular Army, did not succeed in inspiring the Malagan proletariat and the half 'militarized' (i.e. disciplined) troops sent from Valencia to unite in the desperate sort of defence which might have saved Málaga or at least

¹ See *The Daily Telegraph*, 9th December, 1936, and *Le Temps*, 16th November, 1936; also Comité Franco-Espagnol, *Le livre blanc de l'intervention italienne en Espagne* (Paris, 1937), pp. 17-18; Committee of Enquiry into Breaches of International Law relating to Intervention in Spain: *Report and Findings, October 1936* (London, 1936), pp. 6-7. For the Italian Government's assurances to Great Britain that they had no intention of interfering in any way in the *status quo* in the Western Mediterranean see the *Survey for 1936*, pp. 657 seqq. and the present volume, p. 167 n., below.

² See pp. 190-1, 281-3, below.

³ The situation in Málaga up to the time of its occupation by the Nationalists is described in Sir Peter Chalmers-Mitchell's book *My House in Málaga* (London, 1938, Faber).

have postponed its fall; and the fortifications round Málaga and the support which its defenders received from Valencia and from the local committees of the Levante were both unsatisfactory. The Nationalists had been advancing through the mountains from Ronda and along the coast through Estepona and Marbella, but the final blow was given by attacks on several sectors of the front, especially the north and north-east. On the 6th February the rumour that a column of tanks¹ was coming down from the north-east, to cut off the only chance of escape to Motril and Almería, produced a panic. Militiamen, civilian refugees and higher officials all fled along the coast road, and before they reached Almería many had died of hunger and exhaustion, or had been killed by machine-gun fire from the Italian aeroplanes which pursued them. Italian troops do not seem to have taken part in the fighting round Málaga, except possibly in the last stages of it, but they were encamped near the town after the Nationalists' entry on the 8th February, and foreign observers of Republican sympathies praised their soldierly appearance and orderly behaviour, which compared very favourably with that of the Spanish Nationalist volunteers.²

Their defeat at Málaga cost the Republicans heavy losses in men and equipment and much suffering to civilians, both to the 150,000 or 200,000 refugees and to the hungry population of the Levante which had to find room for them. It was also a fresh revelation of how much the Republican commanders, organizers and politicians had still to learn about making war. When once, however, the Nationalist advance had been checked, or had petered out, about ten miles east of Motril and in the mountains north-west of Almería, the taking of Málaga did not add much to the strong position which the Nationalists already enjoyed thanks to their command of the air. They gained a new harbour for their Navy, but for months past it had been practically useless to their opponents. Moreover, without support from the sea Málaga could not have been used as the starting-point for a Republican invasion of Andalusia even if the Republican Army had become strong enough for such an enterprise.

Since the 6th February, 1937, on the other hand, the Nationalists had been attacking a much more vital spot in the Republican defences, namely the main road from Madrid to Valencia. Starting from behind the Madrid-Aranjuez road, they had reached the junction of the rivers Manzanares and Jarama, and though they failed to make

¹ There is some doubt whether tanks were actually used at Málaga, and it has been suggested that a motorized column was mistaken for them.

² Chalmers-Mitchell, *op. cit.*; Koestler, *op. cit.*, pp. 217-18, 222.

their way across to the village of Vaciamadrid, the Valencia road was within range of their guns. On the 12th and 13th February they crossed the Jarama farther south in two places and advanced through the hills towards Arganda and Morata de Tajuna. They now hoped to complete the encirclement of Madrid by cutting the Valencia road to Arganda and the road to Guadalajara and Cuenca at Alcalá de Henares, or by advancing from Morata up the Tajuna valley until they joined hands with the Nationalist force which had already made its appearance nearer the head waters of the Tajuna. On both these fronts the Nationalists met with a stiffer resistance than they had expected, but although they were pushed back south-west of Vaciamadrid and west of Arganda and Morata, they still held positions several miles east of the Jarama, and although the Valencia road was not cut, it was under fire at the Arganda Bridge over the Jarama a couple of miles from the village of Arganda, so that traffic had to make a detour through by-roads.

Next time the main attack came from the north-east side of Madrid in the direction of Guadalajara, and a large number of Italians took part in it. According to one account there were two Italian divisions in the front line and one in reserve, about 9,000 men in all, and 6,000 Spaniards.¹ The 2,000 or 3,000 Republicans facing them were taken by surprise as well as outnumbered, and on the 8th-9th March the Nationalists advanced about twenty miles along the Saragossa Road and in the Tajuna valley, where they occupied Brihuega. By the 10th March, however, the Republicans had hurried up some of their best troops, including the Thälmann and Garibaldi battalions of the International Brigades. Renewed Nationalist attacks on the Jarama did not prevent the Republicans from launching a counter-attack, strongly supported from the air, on the 13th March, and this first recaptured Trijueque and then broke the Nationalist lines between Trijueque and Brihuega, which was recaptured on the 18th March. On the Italians' left flank the Republicans were only just prevented from reaching the main Aragon road almost opposite Sigüenza.² An Italian divisional General, two battalion commanders and 403 other Italians were killed, and 1,994 were wounded,³ and it was afterwards admitted in Nationalist quarters that two battalions had withdrawn in disorder. The Nationalists were left in possession of perhaps a third of the ground that they had gained, but the threat to the Republicans in the Guadarrama or to Madrid's lines of communication had not been perceptibly increased, and during

¹ Borkenau, *op. cit.*, p. 267.

² Cardozo, *op. cit.*, pp. 264-6.

³ See the *Corriere della Sera*, 17th July, 1937.

the rest of the year no new attack came from this direction. Moreover, the Republicans had now shown that they could counter-attack successfully as well as defend fortified positions.

If the Battle of Guadalajara had resulted in what an authoritative contributor to the *Popolo d'Italia*¹ euphemistically called 'an Italian victory of which circumstances prevented the exploitation', this reverse cast discredit not so much on the courage of the Blackshirts, who held their own against picked Republican troops for several days in spite of cold and wet and hunger, and some of whom were most unwilling to retreat, as on the generalship of their commanders, who underestimated both the powers of resistance of the Republicans and the difficulties of using motorized transport under winter conditions. The attack had been delayed by dissensions between the Spanish and Italian commanders, and even at the beginning the weather was bad. The Nationalist advance along the Saragossa road was delayed for several precious hours by a broken bridge, and afterwards all the guns, tanks and transport vehicles had to keep to the main road, as the land on either side was either too hilly or too sodden. The resulting traffic block gave the Republicans a large target and prevented the Nationalists from bringing supplies up to the front line, where many of the men had nothing to eat for several days. The bad weather also enabled the Republicans, for once, to gain command of the air. They had concrete runways in aerodromes close behind the front, whereas the Nationalists' makeshift landing-fields were almost useless, so that the Russian aeroplanes were able to fly low over the Nationalist lines and the roads behind, bombing and machine-gunning with devastating effect.²

From the end of March 1937 till the middle of April the Republicans attacked all along the western Madrid front from the Escorial to Carabanchel; but they gained little or no ground, and they did not succeed in their other aim of making the Nationalists' position in the University City untenable. The chief danger to Madrid during April and the following months came not from the air but from ground-artillery. This bombarded the city sometimes with high-velocity shells which might have been effective against legitimate targets such as the War Office or the skyscraper telephone building, but more often with small shells which battered Madrid until journalists began to compare it with towns in Flanders during the war of 1914-18, and to report that they felt much more comfortable in the trenches and

¹ 17th June, 1937.

² For an interesting criticism of the battle from information obtained on the Nationalist side see *The Daily Telegraph*, 29th March, 1937.

dug-outs of the front line. The shortage of food and fuel still continued; rice, lentils and beans were the main stand-by; and though, in theory, the rationing scheme allowed people half a kilogram of bread, and, more surprising still, half a litre of milk each per day,¹ even bread was sometimes not to be had for days on end.² A change which took place in Madrid in April 1937 was the dissolution of the Junta de Defensa by Señor Largo Caballero's Government. It was replaced by a Municipal Council consisting of sixteen Socialists and Communists, seven Anarcho-Syndicalists and nine representatives of other parties.

Early in March, and again at the end of May, the Republicans were reported on several occasions to be making raids across the Tagus, against the Talavera-Toledo Road and even into the outskirts of Toledo itself. On the 30th May they made a sally down the northern side of the Guadarrama Pass and attacked the village of La Granja, which was only five miles from Segovia. On other fronts the Asturians made a fresh attack on Oviedo at the end of February and advanced some way into the town during the next fortnight, but the Nationalist garrison did not come so near defeat as in October, and the narrow strip of land, sometimes no more than a mile wide, connecting Oviedo with the Nationalist headquarters at Grado was never cut. North-west of Córdoba, towards the end of March, the Republicans checked a Nationalist offensive in the direction of the Almaden mercury mines, and in their turn advanced some distance to the west and south. They did not, however, succeed in re-occupying the Peñarroya mining district, or in working their way down through the gap in the Sierra Morena towards Córdoba. Several small towns in this region changed hands again in July and in the autumn, without either party gaining its main objectives. Skirmishes also took place during the spring in the Guadiana valley, where the Republicans still held Don Benito and Medellín, and near Teruel, where in April they claimed to have gained ground to the west of the River Alfambra.

The most decisive campaigns of the spring and summer of 1937 took place in the North. Direct attacks on Madrid having proved unsuccessful, the Nationalists seem to have decided that they would do better to devote their energies to conquering the Republican enclave in this outlying part of Spain. They began by attacking the one still unsubdued Basque province of Vizcaya, where they stood to gain the

¹ See *The Manchester Guardian*, 2nd April, 1937.

² *Ibid.*, 10th June, 1937. For the question of the evacuation of the non-combatant population of Madrid see pp. 390-2, below.

heavy industries and iron ore trade of Bilbao, in addition to their general aim of removing the potential threat to their rear which was presented by even the most poorly provided Republican armies in this quarter. Besides, now that the Republicans had made the most of Guadalajara, in propaganda if not on the battlefield, the Nationalists needed a spectacular success.¹

The first Nationalist offensive against the Basques was based on Vitoria and was launched on the 31st March, 1937. General Mola's Sixth Army occupied Ochandiano on the 5th April, and the Basques were driven back to a line of defence in the mountains and passes approximately coinciding with the watershed between Ochandiano and Durango. Here they made a stand for over a fortnight, considerably helped by a spell of rainy weather which prevented General Mola from making full use of his overwhelming superiority in aircraft; and the other Nationalist column which was advancing along the San Sebastián–Bilbao road in the direction of Eibar seemed also to be making somewhat slow progress. However, a new attack was delivered from the south, and on the 24th April, thanks to General Mola's skilful tactics and the effectiveness of his guns and aeroplanes now that the weather had improved, the Nationalists broke through the Basque mountain defences at the Pass of Elgueta. They entered Eibar on the 26th April and Durango the next day, while the Basque Army retired in good order to its second line of defence.

All this time the Nationalist Air Force had been attacking the Basques' bases and lines of communication as well as their front line. Bilbao experienced ten air raids on the 22nd and 23rd April alone, and during the next few days Junkers and Heinkel bombers were continually 'circling at leisure over the population for the moral effect produced',² though they dropped most of their bombs by the water front and comparatively few in the centre of the town. The raids which were carried out against towns and villages nearer the front were even more serious. Durango, for instance, was raided four times between the 31st March and the 3rd April, but the most notorious and hotly disputed case was that of Guernica, the little town where the kings of Spain used to swear to respect the ancient laws or *fueros* of the Basques, and round which so many Basque traditions centred.

According to the Basque version of the story Guernica was attacked

¹ The campaign against the Basques has been described from the point of view of both sides by G. L. Steer in *The Tree of Gernika* (London, 1938, Hodder & Stoughton), and by Cardozo, *op. cit.*

² *The Times*, 30th April, 1937.

for three hours on the afternoon of Monday the 26th April by relays of German aeroplanes, which first bombed the town, then machine-gunned the inhabitants as they tried to escape, and then dropped more bombs—incendiary as well as high-explosive. More than 10,000 people were in the town, as many refugees had been coming in and it was also market day, but no troops were concentrated there, and Guernica contained nothing worth bombing from a strictly military point of view except barracks and a munition factory on its outskirts—which, as it happened, remained undamaged. The truth of this story was solemnly affirmed by President Aguirre and other members of the Basque Government,¹ by the Mayor, and by several of the leading inhabitants of Guernica;² and a letter describing the raids on Guernica and other places, signed by twenty Basque priests, including the Vicar-General of the Diocese of Vitoria, was sent to the Pope.³ Statements were also made by Father Onaindia, a Canon of Valladolid, who claimed to have seen the bombing of Guernica,⁴ and by several British journalists—including *The Times* and *The Daily Express* correspondents—two of whom had themselves to hide in a shell-hole, a few miles from Guernica, to escape the German aeroplanes' machine-guns.⁵ Journalists who visited Guernica late on the evening of the 26th April or early next morning reported that they had seen the bodies of people killed by bomb splinters and bullets, as well as bomb-craters which had not been there the day before; that they had picked up fragments of German bombs and unexploded German incendiary bombs dated 1936; and that all accounts given by refugees in the first few hours agreed as to the main points of the story.⁶

The Nationalists at first asserted that none of their aeroplanes had left the ground on Tuesday [*sic*] owing to fog.⁷ Apart from the fact that Guernica was destroyed on Monday, this alibi was called in question when the diary of a German airman captured on the 13th May showed 'Garnika' as an entry for the 26th April, and the airman himself admitted that Guernica had been bombed that day, though by other aeroplanes than his.⁸ However, the Nationalists had already for some days been admitting that it was 'possible that a few bombs

¹ See *The Manchester Guardian*, 29th April, 1937.

² *Ibid.*, 6th May, 1937.

³ See *The Times*, 11th June, 1937.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 3rd May, 1937. Father Onaindia was, it is true, an avowed Basque Nationalist who had previously engaged in propaganda work.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 29th April, 1937.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 28th April and 6th May, 1937; *The Manchester Guardian*, 28th April, 1937; and *The Daily Express*, 11th May, 1937.

⁷ See *The Daily Telegraph*, 30th April, 1937.

⁸ See *The Times*, 15th May, 1937.

fell upon Guernica',¹ or even that it 'was bombed intermittently over a period of three hours'.² But they still insisted that the real damage was done by fire, quite independently of the air raids, and they assured foreign correspondents on the 1st May that only a few bomb fragments had been found, that the few large craters that were to be seen must have been made by mines, that houses had either been bombed or (more often) burnt, but never both, and that traces of benzine and petrol were still to be found in houses which had escaped destruction.³ Thereupon *The Times* correspondent repeated his allegations in greater detail, insisted that he himself had found no traces of petrol on the night of the fire, and suggested that bomb-craters might have been filled in⁴ and petrol spilt about to give the desired effect. It was also discussed whether the ruins of Guernica looked more like those of Irún, which was admittedly burnt, or like those of Durango, which was admittedly bombed, though not quite so destructively. The burning of Eibar was rather different, as its munition factories were of much greater military importance, and after the Nationalists had passed through the town on the 26th April some of the inhabitants were reported to have said that the fire had been started by Syndicalists.⁵ Nevertheless, there was evidence from a correspondent in Nationalist territory that bombers flew in the direction of Eibar on the afternoon of Sunday the 25th April, and that clouds of smoke rose up in the valley where it was situated.⁶

The final and most detailed statement of the Nationalist case came from a Commission appointed by the Technical Department of the Spanish [Nationalist] State which examined witnesses and visited Guernica in July and August 1937. The report⁷ of the Commission, which was published in September, admitted that the outskirts of Guernica had been bombed, but suggested that the aeroplanes either could not be identified or were rather like those of the Republicans, that the incendiary bombs resembled bombs made in Guernica and Bilbao, and that the explosions in the streets had been caused by

¹ See *The Times*, 4th May, 1937.

² *Ibid.*, 5th May, 1937.

³ *Ibid.*, 5th May, 1937, and the *Berliner Tageblatt*, 4th May, 1937.

⁴ The Vitoria correspondent of *The Times* remarked with regard to Vizcaya in general that the disappearance of 'gaping holes left in the highways' was 'a matter of hours only' (*The Times*, 7th May, 1937), but if as many bombs had fallen on Guernica as the pro-Basque reports alleged, the Nationalist scene-shifters would have had a superhuman task.

⁵ See *The Daily Telegraph*, 27th April, 1937.

⁶ See *Le Temps*, 27th April, 1937.

⁷ *Guernica: being the official report of a Commission appointed by the Spanish National Government to investigate the causes of the destruction of Guernica on April 26-28, 1937* (London, 1938, Eyre & Spottiswoode).

dynamite hidden in the sewers. The Commission also brought witnesses to prove that explosions went on during the night of the 26th and that the 'Red Separationists', under the personal supervision of members of the Basque Government, instead of putting out the comparatively few fires which had started during the air raids, had set other houses on fire and plundered them and prevented people from saving their homes or property: also that fires continued to break out, even in houses standing apart from others, up to and even after the entry of the Nationalists. An interesting account by Wing-Commander A. W. H. James, M.P.,¹ who went to Guernica in the autumn of 1937, after taking into consideration the damage done to other places during the Basque campaign and the military situation on the 26th April, supports the theory that there was a genuine air raid, serious enough to cause about one hundred casualties, but that this was followed by incendiaryism. This British observer might, however, be mistaken in suggesting that the Nationalists had no motive for destroying Guernica, since they may well have considered that such an example of 'frightfulness' would increase the Basques' feeling of helplessness under the Nationalist aeroplanes and show them how useless it was to resist.

It is true that the Basque Nationalists and left-wing organizations had an excellent opportunity to burn Guernica and put the blame on their opponents, but if they were guilty of beginning or continuing the fire it is strange that they should not have done more to wreck the bridge over the estuary or the munition factories which would be of use to the Nationalists in capitalist business as well as in war. In favour of the Basque version of the story it may also be suggested that though the Basque Nationalists did not prevent Irún from being burnt, they did protect San Sebastián and afterwards Bilbao from the extremists on their own side. Even if it were true either that President Aguirre and all the other witnesses had really been hushing up a 'red' outrage in order to keep the Popular Front together—which would have been most unlike the usual methods of Spanish politics—or that the Basque Nationalists had themselves burnt down Guernica for purposes of propaganda, carefully arranging to preserve their sacred oak, parliament house and archives, it is even more remarkable that they should have induced public opinion to believe the air-raid story in a district as full of rumours and refugees as the remaining part of Vizcaya must have been. There is a more convincingly Spanish ring about the reply alleged to have been made by a staff officer at Burgos to a Nationalist who complained that the

¹ See *The Daily Telegraph and Morning Post*, 19th February, 1938.

few remaining inhabitants of Guernica would tell the foreign correspondent whom he was escorting that Guernica had been destroyed by aeroplanes. 'Nonsense,' the staff officer is reported to have said, 'we bombed it and bombed it and, *bueno*, why not!'¹

For nearly a week the Basques were able to hold a line of defence which crossed the Durango-Bilbao road a little to the east of Amorebieta and about eleven miles out of Bilbao, and which then passed through mountainous country until it reached the coast at Cape Machichaco. They withdrew from the fishing village of Bermeo, but for three days they cut the Bermeo-Guernica road, and they claimed to have routed a mixed column of Spanish Nationalists and Italians near Bermeo on the 1st May. They were also encouraged at this time by the sinking of the *España* off Santander (either by bombing from the air or, more probably, by a mine) and by the success of British ships in running the blockade into Bilbao.² But at dawn on the 8th May the Nationalists made a highly successful surprise attack on an unwary detachment of Republicans (said afterwards not to have been Basques at all but Asturians)³ who were defending the crests of Mount Solluve, not far south-west of Bermeo. Though the Basques counter-attacked both at Solluve and in the Biskargi Mountains a little farther south, the Nationalist pressure continued from the north-east along the coast and from the east and south as well. Amorebieta was evacuated on the 18th May, and before the end of the month the Nationalists were attacking once more south of the Durango-Bilbao road, at the passes of Barazar and Urquiola near Orduña, at Lemona and in the mountains north of it.

The Nationalist offensive was not delayed for long by the death of General Mola in an aeroplane accident on the 3rd June, and under his successor General Davila the method of attack was much the same. On the 12th June, after the heaviest air and artillery bombardment of the whole Basque campaign, the Nationalists broke through the east side of the 'Iron Ring' of fortifications surrounding Bilbao itself. The Basques had to fall back all along the line, but they went on resisting, and President Aguirre's Government declared that Bilbao would be defended to the last. Nevertheless, arrangements were made on the 14th June for evacuating civilian refugees to Santander, and the British Government agreed that British warships should protect those who were carried by sea.⁴ Those who went by road

¹ This story first appeared in *The Sunday Times* of the 17th October, 1937, and was quoted in *The National Review* of November 1937.

² See pp. 308-9, below.

³ Steer, *op. cit.*, p. 273.

⁴ See also p. 393, below.

are said to have been attacked by Nationalist aeroplanes, just as the refugees from Málaga had been.¹

Like Málaga, again, Bilbao was badly off for food, and this for the same reasons, namely the blockade by sea and the insulation of the city both from its natural sources of supplies in the districts held by the Nationalists and also from the rest of Republican Spain. Besides, Bilbao possessed none of those advantages of *terrain* which had helped the defenders of Madrid. The Nationalists were now near enough to bombard it with 12-inch guns, as well as from the air; but, in order to prepare their attack in such a way as to avoid street fighting as much as possible, they once again decided on an encircling movement. They advanced to the estuary of the river Nervión on the north, and at the same time worked round to the south and south-west in order to cut off the Republicans in the hills dominating the city and in the upper Nervión valley. On the 15th June the Basque Government left Bilbao for Trucios, but there remained a Defence Junta presided over by Señor Leizaola, the Minister for Justice, and resistance continued until the evening of the 18th, when the enemy arrived within striking distance of the two roads leading to Santander via Valmaseda and Castro Urdiales. When evacuation had become inevitable, political prisoners were set free, extremists were prevented from looting and burning, and about a thousand militiamen remained to surrender the town in good order when the Nationalists entered it the next afternoon.

The greater part of the Basque Army had been able to withdraw in the direction of Santander, and some Basque units were observed by the Nationalists to be taking rather successfully to guerrilla warfare in the steep wooded ridges of Western Vizcaya. These were only rear-guard actions, however, and other units were already feeling that the end had come and were surrendering *en masse*. By the 1st July the Nationalists had passed through Valmaseda and were expecting soon to make contact with the other Nationalist forces on the borders of Santander Province. The actual end of Basque armed resistance came, almost simultaneously with the fall of Santander,² when 25,000 men of the Basque militia and a number of Government officials and political leaders surrendered at Laredo and Santoña on the 24th August.

From the beginning, of course, the Basques had stood hardly any chance against the Nationalists. The Russian support of the Republicans had hardly benefited them at all, and they possessed scarcely

¹ For statements by a party of British refugees see *The Daily Telegraph*, 23rd June, 1937.

² See p. 76, below.

any tanks, heavy guns or anti-aircraft guns. At the end of March they possessed seven obsolete bombers and six fighting 'planes. The latter were all subsequently put out of action. The Republicans in the South may have been unable or even unwilling to spare more of their few precious aeroplanes, or they may have been afraid to risk them on the two-hundred-mile flight over hostile country between Madrid and Bilbao, or the still longer flight from Catalonia. Two convoys of aeroplanes had tried to dodge backwards and forwards across the Pyrenees, but when they came down to refuel at Toulouse and Pau they were promptly escorted back in the direction of Barcelona. Seven out of ten fighters which were sent by the direct route reached Bilbao safely, but six of these were destroyed a week or so later during a raid on their aerodrome. In addition to being badly armed the Republican militia in Vizcaya was badly led. The militia columns from Asturias and Santander were said not to have been at their best outside their own country, but the Basque militiamen, of whom there had been about 45,000, showed great courage and endurance, and might have put up a better defence if their commanders, most of whom were Castilians, had been more efficient or inspiring. For instance, the militia were sent into far too many forlorn-hope counter-attacks against strongly held positions. They were also allowed to become unnecessarily defeatist about air attack. By no means every bomb found its intended mark, and indeed nearly half the Nationalists' casualties in some attacks were said to have been caused by their own aeroplanes.¹ Finally, the failure of the last line of the defences of Bilbao to save the city was due, not so much to the plans of the Iron Ring having been betrayed to the enemy by one of the engineers, as to the fortifications having been insufficiently camouflaged and having been made very narrow. When once the Nationalists had broken through, this rigid form of defence made it more difficult for the Basques to recover themselves.²

The conquest of the Basque Provinces by the Nationalists was followed by the loss of Basque regional autonomy. As late as the middle of May rumours had continually been circulating, in spite of official denials, of alleged negotiations between the Basque Government and the Nationalists; and General Franco had at that time offered the Basques 'a Catholic peace, . . . decentralization and respect for local peculiarities and traditions'.³ This was believed to

¹ Cardozo, *op. cit.*, pp. 273-4.

² See B. H. Liddell Hart: 'Lessons of the Spanish War' (in *The National Review*, November 1937, pp. 606-14).

³ *The Times*, 11th May 1937.

mean that the *Concierto Económico*¹ would be maintained, but not the Autonomy Statute of October 1936. The Basques' refusal to surrender cost them even this concession (if it was ever really offered); and by a decree of the 24th June all their former privileges with regard to taxation and local government were withdrawn from the two provinces of Guipúzcoa and Vizcaya, but not from the third province of Álava, which was thus rewarded for having supported the Nationalists.

When once Bilbao was occupied the Nationalists were able to begin 'a very thorough political clean-up'.² This was specially directed against the Basque Nationalists, whom they considered, in view of their better social position and religious traditions, to have sinned far more heinously against the 'national movement of salvation' than the 'Red' proletariat, which had at least the excuse of poverty and ignorance. Besides, the Basques were exponents of a regionalism which was anathema to the Castilian Nationalists with their ancient and deep-rooted passion for centralization.³ Unfortunately many of the Basque Nationalists had not escaped when they could, under the mistaken impression that their war was over and would not be followed by reprisals. A foreign observer who visited Bilbao in November 1937⁴ reported that people believed to have been responsible for the 'Red Terror' were still being captured and tried, and that it was admitted officially that 200 executions had taken place. If figures given by President Aguirre at Barcelona on the 28th December are to be relied upon, 1,000 people had been executed by that date, as many again were under sentence of death, and 10,000 were in prison. The reports that eighty Basques had been shot between the 14th and 16th December, forty-one on the first day, five on the next, and thirty-four on the third, were certainly reminiscent of the executions in Seville prison as described by Mr. Koestler.⁵ It was also alleged that the Basques who surrendered at Laredo and Santoña had done so 'on condition that the civil population was not to suffer reprisals, that the soldiers would not be forced to fight for Franco, and that Government officials, political leaders and army officers would be allowed to leave the country', but that none of these conditions had been fulfilled.⁶ Even the Basque language came under

¹ See p. 39, above.

² See the *Frankfurter Zeitung*, 18th July, 1937.

³ See p. 10 n., above.

⁴ See *The Daily Telegraph and Morning Post*, 25th November, 1937.

⁵ Koestler, *Spanish Testament*, pp. 336 seqq.; see also *The Manchester Guardian*, 21st December, 1937.

⁶ See *The Manchester Guardian*, 30th October, 1937, and Steer, *op. cit.*, pp. 383 seqq.

the disapproval of the Nationalists, and posters were often to be seen in the conquered provinces forbidding the use in public of any language 'other than that of Cervantes'.¹

After the beginning of July the Nationalists' advance towards Santander had been interrupted owing to their need of sending troops south to resist Republican attacks on the Madrid front.² On the 14th August they launched a new offensive, not from the east this time, but from the south, along the Palencia-Santander and Burgos-Santander roads. The Nationalist force consisted of five infantry divisions—about 25,000 men in all—and was very highly mechanized, possessing 200 tanks, about the same number of aircraft and so much artillery that about eighteen batteries seem to have been used in support of each division.³ By attacking through the mountains the Nationalists took the Republicans once again by surprise and outflanked the elaborate defences of Reinosa, which they occupied on the 16th August. They also crossed the main ridge of the Cantabrian Mountains at the Puerto del Escudo after a stiff fight in which the Italian legions claimed to have distinguished themselves. The Republican troops found themselves unable to make much resistance, and on the 23rd August the Nationalists began to close in from the east and south-east as well as from the south. Just as at Bilbao, the final blow was the cutting off of escape to the west, when the Nationalists occupied Torrelavega on the 24th August, and, after a day of chaos during which the 'fifth column', Assault Guards and Civil Guard made themselves masters of Santander, the Italian '23rd of March' Legion headed the Nationalist triumphal entry on the 26th.

While part of the Nationalist force rounded up the Basques⁴ and the other bands of Republicans that were still holding out in Santander Province, the rest of the force advanced westwards into Asturias by the coast road and along the north slopes of the Picos de Europa. Once more, however, the Nationalist advance was delayed, this time by bad weather as well as by a Republican counter-offensive in Aragon.⁵ Moreover, the Asturian mountains were more difficult to pass than those of Santander, and though the Asturians were very short of ammunition they resisted so strongly that heavy artillery preparation was necessary to dislodge them, and the Nationalists themselves seem to have thought it possible that the campaign might not be finished before the winter.⁶ On the 23rd

¹ *The Times*, 21st April, 1938.

² See p. 78, below.

³ See Liddell Hart, *op. cit.*, pp. 609-10.

⁴ See p. 73, above.

⁵ See p. 79, below.

⁶ See the *Frankfurter Zeitung*, 5th November, 1937.

September the Nationalists began an attack along the León-Oviedo road, towards the Puerto de Pajares, but during the next fortnight they made more progress along the coast road leading to Gijón and the road farther inland leading to Oviedo. The decisive battle was fought in this part of Asturias in the third week of October. By a manœuvre like that which they had used at Reinosa a Nationalist column made its way through the mountains round the flank of a formidable line of Republican entrenchments along the River Sella, and another column crossed the Picos de Europa from Riaño. The Republicans had once more been surprised and out-generalled, and an intensification of the air-bombardment prevented them from making a stand on a new line of defences, and spread demoralization behind the lines. With the occupation of Gijón on the 21st October, after a 'fifth column' rising like that at Santander, the defence of Asturias collapsed. On the same day Nationalist troops entered Avilés and received the surrender of the besiegers of Oviedo, and the mining districts farther south were occupied almost at once, having suffered hardly any damage from war or sabotage.

Though a certain number of guerrilla fighters were left in the mountains, where in the early spring of 1938 they were still reported to be giving trouble, the Nationalists had now achieved all the main objects of their northern campaign. They were in possession of the coal-fields of Asturias and of the iron mines and industries of Bilbao, and they were making up for a shortage of labour by employing prisoners of war.¹ These Nationalist gains in territory and economic strength, together with the British interests connected with Bilbao,² may all have contributed to influence the British Government in favour of sending an official representative to Salamanca.³ Moreover, the whole Nationalist Navy could now be concentrated in the Mediterranean, and the Nationalist forces in the North, estimated at 60,000 or 65,000⁴ men, could be transferred to the main front.

On the other hand, the final campaign would have to be fought in central and south-eastern Spain, where the Republicans controlled a larger territory and could more easily receive help from abroad, and though the Republican counter-offensives of the summer and autumn of 1937 failed to achieve any lasting success, the new Citizen Army had acquitted itself in a way that promised well for the future.

The most important of these counter-offensives was delivered to the west of Madrid. It began on the 6th July and was intended to

¹ See *The Daily Telegraph and Morning Post*, 25th November, 1937.

² See pp. 132, 171-2, 174-5, below.

³ See pp. 176-7, below.

⁴ See *The New York Times*, 19th December, 1937.

draw away Nationalist troops from the attack on Santander,¹ and also to drive the Nationalists out of the long salient threatening Madrid by attacking them on both flanks from the Escorial road and from the southern suburbs of Madrid. The troops advancing from the Escorial Road achieved one of the few successful Republican surprises of the war. Strongly supported by tanks and aircraft, they advanced about twelve miles in the first day and seemed about to threaten Navalcarnero and the extremely important Estremadura road. As, however, the second attacking force, which was to have made its way westwards from the suburb of Usera across the Toledo road, failed to break through the Nationalist lines, the Republicans north of the Estremadura road hesitated as to how they could best take advantage of the Nationalists' momentary bewilderment and eventually decided to withdraw to positions immediately in front of Brunete. For the next few days they tried hard to broaden the base of their alarmingly narrow front, and succeeded in taking the villages of Quijorna and Villanueva del Pardillo, but meanwhile the Nationalists were transferring 15,000 men and a strong force of artillery and aircraft from the Santander front. The Nationalist counter-attack began on the 18th July, the ruins of Brunete were retaken a week later, and though Quijorna, Villanueva de la Cañada and Villanueva del Pardillo remained in the hands of the Republicans, it was asserted by the Nationalists that these places were of no strategic importance. As it turned out, indeed, the strip of ground gained can hardly have been worth its heavy cost in casualties, and the fall of Santander was only delayed for a month or six weeks, though the Republicans might have comforted themselves by comparing the Army which for three weeks, and under a blazing sun, had just been taking part in some of the heaviest and most equal fighting of the war, and the militia of the year before, which had so patently lacked the training or equipment even to defend itself against a modern enemy in open country.

Up to the end of the year 1937 the Madrid front remained quiet, except for minor skirmishes and trench raids, the intermittent shelling of the city, and a series of air raids on the neighbouring small towns and villages at the end of September. The strong lines of defences in the Manzanares Valley and on the Jarama front and the string of fortified posts on the Guadarrama, Somosierra and Guadala jara fronts were comparatively lightly held, and it seemed as though the Nationalists were coming to think that the prestige value

¹ See p. 76, above. For a particularly interesting account of the Brunete offensive see the *Frankfurter Zeitung*, 18th August, 1937.

of Madrid was not worth the large-scale operations that would be necessary for taking it, the damage that would be done to it in the process, and the responsibility of feeding and governing its inhabitants.

The next Republican counter-offensives were delivered in Aragon. On the Teruel front at the end of August the Republicans gained ground in the Sierra Palomera to the north of Teruel and also farther to the west, where the Nationalists had relieved Albarracín in the middle of July, had since reached the borders of the Province of Cuenca, and were even reported to have made contact with the Nationalist troops in Guadalajara. On the Saragossa-Jaca front the former Catalan Army, now reorganized as the Eastern Army under the command of General Pozas, began an offensive against Saragossa on the 24th August, and were able to cut the Saragossa-Huesca road, though they failed to capture the important positions of Zuera and Almudévar. South of the Ebro the Republicans entered Quinto and claimed also to have taken Belchite on the 3rd September. Later on in September a Republican flying column made its way across the lower ridges of the Pyrenees to the valley of the Gállego, where it turned south along the road leading into the interior of Spain from the Pourtalet Pass in order to threaten the communications between Jaca and Huesca. On the 12th October yet another offensive began, this time against Fuentes de Ebro, sixteen miles south of Saragossa, and in the hills west of the Ebro; but little progress was made, though, according to Nationalist reports, the Republicans were better armed than ever before.

All fronts were quiet by the beginning of November, and there was no sign that General Franco was about to deliver the final blow by which it had been supposed that he might finish the war before the end of the year, and for which the continual air raids on towns along the Mediterranean coast were believed to be in preparation. (The Republicans bombed Palma de Majorca and Saragossa by way of reprisals.) General Franco's delay may have been due to the exceptionally heavy rain, or to the northern campaign having taken longer than was expected, or to the need for resting his troops and organizing the transport of men and supplies. Dissensions among the Nationalist factions, and even between the Nationalists and the too-victorious Italians may, if reports are to be believed, have counted for something in the delay, and so may the improvement in the Republican Army, which had now grown to thirteen Army Corps of between 25,000 and 30,000 men each. The serious danger facing the Republicans at this time was not so much their shortage of guns

and aeroplanes as their shortage of food. This was particularly acute in Catalonia, where a dense industrial population had now been swelled by an enormous influx of refugees, who flocked in from the Basque Provinces and Asturias via France, as well as from the lost territories in the South-West.¹

(iii) The Use of Methods of Terrorism by both Parties

From the very first, the war in Spain became a tragic example of what an English correspondent in Andalusia described as 'the peculiar attitude—a combination of fatalism, exaltation and delight in all destruction—which' Spaniards 'have towards death'.² The factions had each a long tradition of cruelties inflicted and suffered, and it was at once clear that the defeated could expect no mercy. Another cause of fear and hatred peculiar to a civil war was the difficulty of recognizing the enemy. At the outbreak of the war Republicans and Nationalists were living side by side with one another and with those who were not yet known to be members of either faction. How, therefore, were the party in power to know which members of the police, civil service or army, or which unobtrusive and innocent-seeming private citizens, were acting as spies for the other side or were biding their time to revolt? How could any one know that one of his neighbours had not given information to guide raiding aeroplanes or was not collecting names for a black list to be used when his own faction got the upper hand? Besides, there was always the possibility that desperate men belonging to the defeated faction might start firing round any corner and from any private house (as a professional man and his sons did in Málaga in July 1936, three days after the first bout of fighting was over).³ Or they might be suspected of ambushing their enemies by night, like the Barcelona Fascists who were said to drive about in cars disguised with official emblems.⁴

From necessity as well as from inclination, therefore, both sides took drastic action against political or class enemies who remained within their territory. It was not until the end of August 1936 that special tribunals were established in all the provinces of Republican Spain, each consisting of three judges of law and fifteen representatives of Popular Front organizations to act as judges of fact. The rounding up of Nationalist suspects had, however, been, and continued to be, in the hands of committees, such as the Investigation Committee at Barcelona which was a branch of the Committee of Anti-Fascist

¹ See pp. 395–6, below. ² *The Manchester Guardian*, 26th August, 1936.

³ *Ibid.*, 13th August, 1936.

⁴ See *The New York Times*, 4th September, 1936.

Militias, or the Committee of Public Safety at Málaga which shot considerably more than a hundred people in five days early in August.¹

At Madrid, the Communists, Socialists and Anarchists each maintained an Investigation Committee with its own list of suspects, and when one of these suspects was arrested the three committees consulted one another as to whether he should be executed or be released. After the special tribunals were set up these committees continued to deal with cases which did not fall under established civil or military law, and for some time the central administration was not strong enough to prevent their dealing with any other cases if they chose. Suspects who had been acquitted by the special tribunals were therefore often re-arrested by the committees.

An even more unpleasant form of terrorism was the killing of people without trial, not for any particular offence against the Republic but simply because they were capitalists, priests, aristocrats, or landlords, or belonged to some other class considered by the revolutionary proletariat as an enemy. Indeed it was reported that at the beginning of the war the Anarcho-Syndicalists were with difficulty persuaded not to kill all people whose names appeared in lists of the right wing parties. Sometimes employers were killed by pickets chosen from their own workers or from the trade union to which the workers belonged, landowners by their own labourers and so on, but in other cases personal relationships made for mercy rather than for ruthlessness. There were stories, for instance, of the director of a well-known newspaper being defended by his own employees against an armed raiding party; of villagers beating and disarming kidnappers who were trying to hold priests to ransom;² and even of a retired policeman's life being spared because of the protests of his neighbours that he was, after all, 'a son of the village'.³ Again, in the Aragonese town of Fraga, the killing of thirty-eight 'Fascists' out of a population of about a thousand in the first month of the war was organized by the Durruti Anarchist column, though some of the villagers enjoyed it well enough; and in other villages in that part of the country the local Anarcho-Syndicalists killed far fewer people and were on quite good terms with local professional men who were not actively Nationalist.⁴

For months after the first outburst of war and revolution was over, it was still a common occurrence in Republican territories for armed

¹ See *The Manchester Guardian*, 31st August, 1936.

² See *The Times*, 31st August, 1936.

³ See *The Manchester Guardian*, 13th August, 1936.

⁴ See Borkenau, *op. cit.*, pp. 97-8, 101-4.

men to force their way into a house, carry off their victims by car to a lonely place on the outskirts of the town, and shoot them there. In Madrid the average number of bodies found every morning was about thirty in the first few weeks, and though for a while it fell as low as twenty, it rose to fifty in October; and 12,000 was a by no means exaggerated estimate of the number of murders of this kind which had been committed in Barcelona before the end of 1936. The 'Dawn Patrols' responsible for these crimes were often acting entirely on their own initiative, and the responsibility of the trade unions and political organizations whose badges they wore lay rather in their having encouraged habits and principles of violence and indiscipline in their followers than in their having actually given orders for particular murders.

Among these terrorists were men and women who were remarkable for their disinterested devotion to the revolutionary cause and whose courtesy and integrity of character often made a great impression on foreigners and even on neutral Spaniards who had to deal with them. But though they were capable of burning delicacies taken from a grocer's shop, or valuables and bank-notes taken from churches, in order to be able to declare that 'Spanish workmen do not steal, they have far too much sense of honour',¹ they accepted and even rejoiced in the violent methods by which they considered that the revolution must be brought about. In many cases, however, the motives of the terrorists and informers were more mixed. They might be influenced by a desire to pay off old scores against people who had injured them in the past; or to get rid of people, such as pressing creditors, who might be inconvenient to them in future; or merely to buy their own safety by ingratiating themselves with the committees and independent gangs. Besides this, there were the professional gunmen and racketeers who made a profitable business out of kidnapping or blackmailing the bourgeoisie or smuggling them into membership of a revolutionary organization.

The Anarcho-Syndicalists had the worst reputation of all the left-wing movements for terrorism, since they were the most extreme in their views and since the 'killing without hatred' of class enemies was one of their avowed principles. It was also much easier for gangsters (as it was for Nationalist agents and bourgeois in search of camouflage) to make their way into a libertarian organization than into one where the party discipline was stronger. Some of the gun-

¹ The first of these examples is from Málaga, the second from Barcelona (see *The Manchester Guardian*, 12th August, 1936, and Borkenau, *op. cit.*, pp. 73-4).

men were indeed reported to have belonged to the Federación Anarquista Ibérica before the war, and at the same time to have hired themselves out when required as assassins to the Falangists. Many Anarchists would of course have had no objection to murdering a Socialist or Communist, and the extremist factions of the Left went on fighting each other even after war had broken out against the Nationalists.¹

It was very difficult for the Government and the more moderate section of the community to restrain the gangsters and revolutionaries, as the Police and Army had either gone over to the Nationalists or else were needed at the front, and there was no general feeling in Spain that law and order must at all costs be maintained. The Central Government, the Catalan Generalitat and the Madrid Defence Junta repeatedly issued appeals and decrees for the prevention of terrorism and the handing over of private stocks of weapons. They formed special vigilance and rearguard militias to deal with Nationalist suspects, especially where the searching of houses was concerned, and announced that armed men taking police duties upon themselves would be handed over to military justice as rebels, or shot out of hand. At last at the end of December 1936 it was decreed that the four or five kinds of police then in existence should be replaced by a single Police Corps under a National Council of Security elected by the Popular Front organizations and by the police themselves, but presided over by the Minister for the Interior. A scheme for the re-organization of the Catalan police on the same lines was approved by the Generalitat at the beginning of March 1937.² Both schemes would manifestly take a long while to put into effect. By the spring of 1937 the streets of Madrid were, however, already being patrolled by police at night, and the number of murders was decreasing.³ In some at least of the smaller towns order was restored, or one might even say created, with remarkable success. In an account of her work in a hospital in Murcia in the summer of 1937 an Englishwoman wrote:

Life, except for the presence of a large number of refugees and

¹ See further, pp. 98-9, below. A vivid description of Anarchists, Syndicalists and other revolutionaries is given in Ramón Sender's novel *Seven Red Sundays* (Harmondsworth, Middlesex, 1938, Penguin Books Ltd.). This book was wholesome reading for both pro-Republicans and pro-Nationalists, since it displayed Spanish revolutionaries in all their violence and at the same time made it evident that an authoritarian régime was not likely to root out Anarchism by killing Anarchists or to offer the Spanish proletariat a means of using its fine natural qualities to better advantage.

² See *Le Temps*, 4th March, 1937.

³ For the introduction of new methods of terrorism by the Communists see footnote on p. 99, below.

wounded men, is normal, in some ways far better organized than before the war. It is possible for a woman to walk unattended about the streets of a town after dark without being molested—an advance indeed in Andalusia.¹

This and other reports from relief workers also gave a not unfavourable impression of the growth of order and of a sort of public spirit which might conceivably become a creative antidote to the destructive forms of Anarchism.

Many of the murders of class enemies on the Republican side were, beyond doubt, extremely brutal, but there was not so much trustworthy evidence to show that the fiendish tortures described by 'anti-Red' newspapers and propagandists were at all common. Two of the most interesting commentators, a correspondent of *The Manchester Guardian* writing from Andalusia and a sociologist who travelled over much of Republican Spain, were agreed as to the absence in general of the pathological type of atrocities and even of pathological excitement among the masses.²

Meanwhile Nationalist Spain also suffered from official repression and unofficial terrorism. The Nationalists made full use of the opportunity given them by their military successes to inflict official punishment on the Republican prisoners who kept on falling into their hands, and the commanders of their motorized columns deliberately made sure that as few Republicans as possible should be left in any place which they had raided or through which they had advanced. In the opinion of their courts-martial and emergency military tribunals any form of armed resistance constituted 'military rebellion' and was in most cases punishable by death, even if no arson, pillage or other crimes had been committed; and a bruise on the prisoner's right shoulder which might have been caused by the kick of a rifle was held to be sufficient evidence. For instance, Spaniards who visited Huelva at the end of August 1936 reported that the trial of sixty-eight Rio Tinto miners accused of serving in the Republican Army had resulted in sixty-seven death sentences;³ and, according to a later report, 1,500 men had been shot after the Nationalists had occupied the district.⁴ Again, after the taking of Badajoz, the Nationalist commander, Colonel Yague, was reported to have issued a proclamation to the effect that any one who failed to return to work

¹ I. I. Macdonald: 'Summer in Murcia in 1937' in *Newnham College Roll: Letter, January 1938* (Cambridge, privately printed, 1938), pp. 39-45.

² See *The Manchester Guardian*, 31st August, 1936, and Borkenau, *op. cit.*, pp. 134-5, 251 *seqq.*

³ See *The Times*, 1st September, 1936.

⁴ See *The Manchester Guardian*, 14th November, 1936.

by a given day, or to surrender his arms within four hours, would be shot after summary trial.¹ It was almost equally dangerous to have held any civil employment connected with the Government. Just before the fall of Santander, for instance, a doctor in charge of one of the hospitals made his escape, leaving his patients to get on as well as they could without him, and when an English relief worker blamed him for this she was told that he would certainly have been shot if the Nationalists had caught him, though he had never taken an active part in politics. The number of executions in Seville was estimated at an average of fifty a day for many weeks.²

Some of the prisoners sentenced to death were executed almost at once; others remained for weeks or even months in prison, not unkindly treated by the actual prison authorities, but never knowing which night they would be taken out and shot.³ Even those who had not yet been tried could not be sure that they might not be released only to find an armed guard waiting to carry them off to the same fate;⁴ and Republican suspects who were still at liberty in Nationalist territory were just as likely to be 'taken for a ride' as Nationalist suspects in Republican territory. The victims of these semi-official executions were not by any means all 'Red Revolutionaries', and in December 1936 the Spanish Embassy in London published a list of the names of fifteen priests and ninety Liberals, Freemasons, and well-known scholars and professional men, all of whom, it was alleged, had been shot without trial. As in Republican Spain, there were many mutually independent powers in the Nationalists' domain. Monarchists, Clericals, Falangists, Requetés, Army, Civil Guard, and so on, all had it in their power, if they chose, to yield to the temptation of removing public or private enemies. Property was being requisitioned or confiscated from 'Leftists'; 'free-will offerings' were being extracted; and here again it was alleged that the blackmailers and racketeers were not neglecting their opportunities.⁵ Like the party committees in Madrid, the Falangists had their own intelligence service and tribunals. They had 'totalitarian' standards of what constituted a crime, and acquired an unpleasant reputation among the Republicans for cruelty. Nevertheless they were said—at least so far as the neighbourhood of Burgos was concerned—to

¹ See *The Daily Telegraph*, 17th August, 1936.

² See E. H. Keeling, 'A Tour of Nationalist Spain' in the *Journal of the Royal United Service Institution*, May 1937.

³ See Antonio Ruiz Vilaplana, *Burgos Justice* (London, 1938, Constable); A. Koestler, *Spanish Testament*.

⁴ Ruiz Vilaplana, *op. cit.*, pp. 38-9.

⁵ *Op. cit.*, pp. 169-84.

have been less cruel than the reactionaries and the Civil Guard, and to have executed a number of their own followers for taking private vengeance and committing other crimes. These Burgos Falangists, at least, were also reported to have made some effort to find out whether their prisoners were guilty or not and to have shown themselves comparatively lenient to the rank and file of Republican organizations as distinguished from the leaders.

At the beginning of the war both sides took very few prisoners during the actual fighting, and most of those that they did capture were shot after a summary trial or none at all. In this there was very little to choose between Nationalists and Republicans (though the fortunes of war did not allow the Republicans to capture so many). In the spring of 1937 prisoners of war belonging to 'Fascist' organizations or to the Civil Guard were still being shot by Republicans, but those who could convince their captors that they had been conscripted against their will were being enlisted forthwith in the Republican Army. It appears that the Nationalists likewise were then dealing with their prisoners in this way.

The taking of hostages was also not confined to one side. The Nationalists, for instance, carried off at least twenty into the Alcázar;¹ but much more was heard of those held by the Republicans as, owing to Nationalist victories and Nationalist air raids, they were the most often in danger of reprisals. At San Sebastián and Irún in August 1936 they were reported to be imprisoned in places likely to be bombarded. Of the two hundred hostages at Fort Guadelupe near Irún, four were shot on the 19th August, and another nine on the 4th September. Next morning their guards were said to have got drunk and to have let them go just ten minutes before the Republican mob came up to murder them.² The danger of attacks by the mob made all prisoners into hostages to some extent. In Málaga on the 23rd August, in this case after an air raid, forty-five prisoners were murdered in this way. In Madrid the news of the fall of Badajoz coincided with, or produced, a mutiny of the 3,000 men in the Model Prison. Crowds gathered outside the prison, a people's court was formed and many prisoners, including well-known right wing politicians, were shot at once.³ Even in Bilbao, some of the hostages who had been transferred from San Sebastián, together with other

¹ See p. 56, above.

² See *The Times* and *The Daily Telegraph* of the 7th September, 1936. The denouement of this particular story is perhaps to be discounted, since an alleged escape from the jaws of death was a perpetually recurring stock feature in stories of the kind.

³ See Borkenau, *The Spanish Cockpit*, pp. 125-6.

prisoners, were murdered in riots following air raids on the 25th–26th September, 1936, and the 4th January, 1937.¹

It is easier to give some account of the atrocities committed by both sides than to draw conclusions as to which was the more to blame, taking into account such things as the terrorism and interference with property of which both were guilty, the Republicans' anti-religious activities and destruction of works of art, and the Nationalists' intensive air raids which inflicted such suffering on civilians. In any case this question (like that of which side was the more guilty of starting the war) was far less important than the question of what sort of Government might in the future enable Spaniards to make the most progress towards the not always easily reconcilable objectives of liberty, good government, social justice and prosperity. Even if the Republicans were to win the war they would still have to deal with conflicts inside their own movement, as well as with an immediate social revolution and with the special economic difficulties arising out of it. On the other hand, the revolution would (presumably) only be postponed if the former ruling classes were restored to power and, like the French *émigrés* a century earlier, should prove to have learnt nothing and forgotten nothing during their time in the wilderness. There was not much more to be hoped for from the Falangist version of the 'totalitarian' movement which was sweeping over so many nations at this time. The Falange might pay more attention to social justice than the Nationalist right wing, but it was no more likely to cure the Spaniards' tendency to anarchy than the other kinds of religious and political absolutism under which Spain had lived in the past. The most promising schemes for the future were those which allowed for some form of federation in which the different regions could keep their own individuality. It was, indeed, one of the chief merits of the Popular Front that it was more sympathetic to regionalism than the Nationalists were—if it might be assumed that the influence of the Basque and Catalan regionalists, who had already secured their autonomy statutes, had some prospect of counterbalancing that of the Socialists and Communists, who were not naturally supporters of regionalism. But the Spanish civil war had so many aspects of its own (quite apart from its international implications) that, even if the conflict between regions were removed, there would still remain the class war, whether this took the form of industrial disputes, opposition to the Catholic Church, or the struggle for the land. Economic and social reforms might help to prevent conflicts of interest and creed from becoming destructive feuds, but the

¹ See G. L. Steer, *The Tree of Gernika*, pp. 76–7, 110 seqq.

only hope of lasting peace was that a sufficient number of Spaniards belonging to different parties should come to see that 'the solution cannot be extermination or subjection, it must inevitably be co-existence or even co-operation'.¹ In June 1938, when this chapter was being written, this condition seemed to be even further from being fulfilled than it had been during the winter of 1937, when the war had seemed not unlikely to end in a stalemate.

(iv) Political Changes on the Republican Side (1936-7)

IN an earlier chapter² an account has been given of the fighting in Spain which began in July 1936 with a military *Putsch* that was met by a proletarian revolution. The resulting war, which had opened with a series of Republican defeats, seemed by the beginning of December 1937 to have reached a stage at which the Republicans were giving ground much more slowly, and at which it was not inconceivable that, unless Russian help greatly decreased or German and Italian help greatly increased, the war might end in a stalemate or the tide might even turn in the Republicans' favour. These military developments had their civil counterparts in certain social and political changes in Republican Spain, the general trend of which ran through the more violent form of social revolution that was preferred by the Anarcho-Syndicalists and the anti-Stalinite Communists of the Partido Obrero de Unificación Marxista (P.O.U.M.)³ towards the more moderate forms that were preferred by the Republican Union and Republican Left parties, the right-wing Socialists and the Stalinite Communists. The last-named party soon became a very strong anti-revolutionary element in the Popular Front, but did not succeed in establishing a lasting ascendancy over the other 'anti-Fascist' groups; and in the course of 1937 it suffered a number of set-backs at the hands of the moderate Socialist and Republican parties.

Immediately after the outbreak of war, the political situation was as follows. The moderate Popular Front Government in which Señor Casares Quiroga had held office as Premier since the 13th May, 1936, resigned during the night of the 18th-19th July. Señor Martínez Barrio then formed a Government in which Señor Sánchez Román, leader of a party which did not belong to the Popular Front, was appointed Minister for the Interior and seats were kept open for

¹ Quoted from a letter by Professor Castillejo published in *The Times* of the 1st May, 1937.

² Section (ii) of this part.

³ The P.O.U.M. was often described as 'Trotskyist', but some at least of its adherents seem to have adopted a variety of left-wing Communism which claimed to be less 'academic' than that of Trotsky.

General Mola and for another representative of the Nationalists. The Martínez Barrio Cabinet was thus the first of the attempts at conciliation with a bias in favour of the Nationalists which were more than once the subject of secret negotiations during the war. However, it only remained in office for a few hours, owing to the opposition of the workers' organizations; and the Cabinet formed by Señor Giral which took its place in the early hours of the 19th July differed very little from that which had resigned with Señor Casares Quiroga.

Señor Giral's Cabinet was formed of members of the Republican Left, Republican Union and Radical-Socialist Parties only, and could therefore claim to be less revolutionary in composition than the existing Popular Front Government in France. The real power, however, lay with the workers' organizations, whose threat to overthrow the Government by force if they were not supplied with arms had already been the main cause of the resignation of Señor Martínez Barrio. By yielding to their demands Señor Giral made it possible for the struggle against the Nationalists to be carried on, but only at the cost of letting loose a fierce and widespread proletarian revolution. Not only were the Government unable to keep order among their turbulent allies with the scanty forces at their disposal, but the management of the war came to be largely in the hands of mixed committees representing all the Popular Front organizations. Madrid was on the whole ruled by the old administration, though the political parties arrogated to themselves a good deal of authority; but Catalonia had a central committee of the anti-Fascist militias, and Valencia was ruled by a People's Executive Committee that was virtually independent of the Central Republican Government. In towns and villages throughout Republican territory committees of this sort sprang up, sometimes overshadowing or entirely replacing the *ayuntamientos* or Municipal Governments, sometimes merging into them. This last type of committee was to be met with round Madrid and in North-Eastern Andalusia, while the *sindacatos* of Southern Andalusia seem to have been open to any inhabitants of the town or village who cared to attend. The several revolutionary movements, however, kept their independent organizations and private armies, and this arrangement, together with the fact that the driving force of the Republican resistance came from below, was not so conducive to efficiency as it was to enthusiasm.

In discussing the events of the next few months it may perhaps be more convenient to begin with Catalonia, where the situation changed earlier than in Castile and the Levante and where it

illustrates more clearly the contrast between the moderates and the extremists, because of the great influence of the Anarcho-Syndicalists in Barcelona.

In July 1936 the Catalan Generalitat Government was composed of representatives of the Esquerra, Acció Catalana and the Rabassaires or Tenant Farmers' Party, but at Barcelona, as at Madrid, the real power was held by the workers' organizations. The Government parties were represented on the Committee of Fifteen which had control of the militia and on the Economic Council which was set up in the middle of August to supervise the collectivization of industry, trade and agriculture, but the Government representatives had in neither case a majority over those of the other anti-Fascist organizations. The position was similar in the case of the innumerable local committees which were carrying out practically independent experiments in revolutionary local government in the towns and villages of Catalonia.

At the beginning of the civil war by far the strongest of the Catalan revolutionary organizations were the Anarcho-Syndicalist Confederación Nacional del Trabajo and Federación Anarquista Ibérica. The central offices of the F.A.I. and C.N.T. were remarkable among the improvised administrations of the first few months of the war for their comparative order and efficiency, and a pass counter-signed by high officials of these organizations carried far more weight than one from the Generalitat or even from the Socialist Unión General de Trabajadores (U.G.T.), though the latter had a large membership which included many of the state and municipal workers and of the employees of private firms and about half the railwaymen. The C.N.T., on the other hand, controlled a majority of the transport workers in the aggregate, and its influence was strong among all factory workers, especially those in the textile industries. The Anarcho-Syndicalists had produced some of the best columns of militia under the old revolutionary system, and had sent missionary columns throughout the countryside urging the peasants to collectivize the land, burn churches, destroy all legal documents connected with property and exterminate class enemies. Their strong position on the Militia Committee and Economic Council was backed by their private supplies of arms, and when in the first week of August 1936 three members of the Partido Socialista Unificado de Cataluña (P.S.U.C.)¹ joined the Government of the Generalitat, the opposition of the Anarcho-Syndicalists was sufficient to force them to withdraw from it within a few days.

¹ See p. 92, below.

During July and August, in fact, the Anarchist type of spontaneous revolution was extremely successful so far as Catalonia was concerned, both in resisting the immediate danger from the enemies of the proletariat and in the purifying work of destruction which Anarchists believed to be necessary before the natural goodness of Humanity could be set free to create a new society. The fact that they were not getting on so fast with legislation for the working of the land and the exchange of goods in the libertarian commonwealth seems to have troubled them very little, since they cared far more for freedom and human dignity than for prosperity. They even preferred at this stage to build up their libertarian Communism from below, taking over the management of factories where the owners were 'not available' and introducing the abolition of money and the common ownership of goods and direct exchange with the outside world in those towns and villages which did not resist these changes.¹ But, on the other hand, they hoped soon to be able 'to consider a policy nearer to the fulfilment of their maximum programme, i.e. the full abolition of the state (meaning by that the replacing of the Generalitat by the committees), even if other parties' resisted their aims.² They even appear to have believed that the signal for this second revolution would be given by the fall of Saragossa, since their ignorance of the real military situation and their inability to see further than the immediate problems of Catalonia and South-East Aragon were such that they imagined that Saragossa would fall within the next few weeks and that this defeat alone would be such a crushing blow to the Nationalists that Anarcho-Syndicalism would then be set free for a trial of strength on the domestic front.

From the first, the moderate parties, and particularly the Esquerra, which had gone out to fight on the 19th July for Catalan home rule as well as for the liberal bourgeois revolution, had objected strongly to the violent methods of the Anarcho-Syndicalists and to the disorganization of the economic life of the country. The Catalan home ruler and separatist was apt to think of Anarcho-Syndicalists as undesirable aliens from Murcia, whose leading newspaper, the *Solidaridad Obrera*, was written in Castilian though it appeared in Barcelona; who chalked the walls with such slogans as 'No Catalan spoken here' or 'Viva Murcia', and who hoped to found a federation based on free communes which would not leave enough room for Catalonia as a regional entity.³ There is no doubt, however, that the Catalan element in the Anarcho-Syndicalist movement was stronger than

¹ See Borkenau, *op. cit.*, pp. 79-80, 87-9.

² *Op. cit.*, p. 88.

³ See also pp. 94-5.

bourgeois regional patriotism would admit. According to a student of Spanish affairs who read this chapter before it went to press and who was not himself an Anarcho-Syndicalist, before 1934 it would have been difficult to find any group of manual workers in Barcelona which did not belong to that movement, while almost all the leaders of the C.N.T. came from either Catalonia or Aragon and none, so far as he knew, from Murcia or Andalusia. Several of the Anarcho-Syndicalist leaders, for instance Señora Federica de Montseny and Señor García Oliver, had Catalan names, and there were enough local Anarchists to control many town and village committees, especially in Barcelona Province and along the coast.

Now that a 'proletarian' revolution had broken out, peasants who disliked the decree of the 30th August, 1936, which made it compulsory for them to join village syndicates, small shopkeepers and industrialists, of whom there were a great many in Catalonia, technical and black-coated workers, civil servants and the remainder of the police and the army were all seeking protection against the extremist revolutionaries. A great number of them hoped to find it in the P.S.U.C., the union of Socialist and Communist parties which had been negotiated shortly before the outbreak of war, which was affiliated to the Comintern and which was the least revolutionary of the left-wing groups in Catalonia that were not represented in the Generalitat Government.

Besides professing respect for the small peasant and the small industrialist, the P.S.U.C., like the Spanish Socialist movement outside Catalonia, which had not yet entered into any union with the Communists, stood for centralization and authority. It also insisted that the war must be won before the revolution could be completed, the kind of revolution aimed at being, in any case, not 'proletarian' but admittedly 'bourgeois' and strongly opposed to the more violent changes being carried out by the Anarcho-Syndicalists.¹ The P.S.U.C. therefore considered that the newly recruited forces of the Republic ought to be formed into a 'People's Army' under military discipline, with regularly appointed officers. Anarchists, on the other hand, wanted the militia to be better trained and armed, but not to be 'militarized'. Though troops of this kind might be an excellent instrument for starting the second revolution which the Anarchists were understood to be planning—so long as there were no loyal professional troops to deal with them—they were already proving unequal to making war against the Nationalists. Indeed, one of the surest foundations of the increasing power of the P.S.U.C. was the

¹ See p. 91, above.

support, either through new recruits to the party itself, or through the acquiescence of the Esquerra, of those classes of people whose military, technical or administrative skill would be of value, not only against the Nationalists, but also against left-wing revolutionaries.

The entry of the C.N.T. and the P.O.U.M., as well as the P.S.U.C., into the Generalitat Council on the 27th September, 1936, meant, in the long run, something very different from a shifting of power still further to the Left. Though the C.N.T. had salved its conscience in the matter of taking part in politics by stipulating that the new Cabinet should be called the Generalitat Council instead of the Generalitat Council of Government, the new move was in itself an unconscious admission that neither the war nor even the social revolution could be carried on by purely Anarchist methods. The first manifesto of the new Government,¹ and the agreement between the four main Socialist-Communist and Anarcho-Syndicalist organizations which was signed on the 22nd October,² both laid stress on the paramount need for winning the war, and both put forward proposals for economic collectivization which made concessions to the small industrialist and even to the small owner of house property, though the Anarcho-Syndicalists could console themselves with the proposals for the ownership of land by the municipalities and for a unified system of education.

Other events during the autumn in Catalonia showed that, instead of influencing the Government in the direction of Anarchism, the C.N.T. were steadily losing ground to the P.S.U.C. The Militia Committee and Economic Council were merged in the Generalitat and its administrative departments, and the Committee for Internal Security, which had formerly been a branch of the Militia Committee, was now made responsible to the Councillor for the Interior. Generalitat Councillors visited Lérida and Tarragona in the hope of bringing the local committees into line with the policy of the Government, and later on it was arranged (though of course the change took a long time to come into effect) that all the town and village committees should be fused with the new municipal councils consisting of members nominated by the Popular Front organizations under the chairmanship of an *alcalde* nominated by the civil governor of the province.

The power and prestige of the orthodox Communists, who had become the strongest element in the P.S.U.C., had been increasing

¹ Text in *Le Temps*, 28th September, 1936.

² Text in *The Manchester Guardian*, 29th October, 1936.

even more rapidly after large supplies of armaments had begun to reach Spain from the U.S.S.R. in October 1936,¹ and in the second week in December they provoked a political crisis which turned out unquestionably to their advantage, thanks to their being able to threaten that Russian help would be withheld. The new Council which was formed on the 17th December might seem at first sight to be more revolutionary than the last, since the Socialists and Communists were now represented through the trades-union organization of the U.G.T. and not through a political party, and two new councils were established to deal with economic affairs and defence. These councils were, however, directly responsible to the Generalitat Council, and the Council had also assumed plenary powers which could be used for the enforcement of its authority over what were coming to be called the 'uncontrolled' groups of revolutionaries. The orthodox Communists had also scored a sectarian triumph in bringing about the exclusion of the P.O.U.M. from the Council.

The position of Catalonia in the matter of self-government also underwent great changes during the course of the war. One of the first results of the rising of July 1936 was to give the Catalans a far greater degree of independence than was provided for in the Autonomy Statute.² A Defence Minister was added to the Catalan Government, and on the 19th August the Generalitat relieved their delegate to the Central Government of his duties, and announced that they would assume responsibility for all public business, including public order and the administration of justice (though these two departments were, in practice, far more in the hands of the anti-Fascist committees). The several collectivization decrees, of which the most striking were those of the 19th August and 28th October, 1936, were put into force independently of similar decrees issued by the Republican Government then installed at Madrid, and by the end of December 1936 the Generalitat had replaced the anti-Fascist militia by a Catalan Army, had begun to issue its own currency notes, and had appointed a Secretary for External Relations.

At this stage the relationship between the Generalitat and the Central Republican Government was much more like that between two equal allies than that between a Central Government and a self-governing region under its sovereignty. A cross current was set in motion by a proposal for the federation of Catalonia, Valencia, Alicante and the part of Aragon that was in Republican hands—a suggestion which, to judge by the internal evidence, may have come from the Anarcho-Syndicalists, and which is reported to have played

¹ See pp. 250–1, below.

² See p. 36, above.

a considerable part in the formation of Señor Largo Caballero's first Government at Madrid in September 1936. Immediately on coming into office Señor Largo Caballero had exercised the Central Republican Government's authority over the Generalitat so far as to recall the Catalan expeditionary force from Majorca,¹ but the Catalonian left-wing organizations' agreement of the 22nd October² only envisaged collaboration with the Central Republican Government after this should have come to include all the organizations represented on the Generalitat. This condition was fulfilled by the entry of four Anarcho-Syndicalists into the second Largo Caballero Government which was formed on the 4th November, 1936, and shortly afterwards the celebrated Durruti column was transferred to the Madrid front.³

The value of their new independence had, however, been lessened for the Catalan regionalists by the fact that the real power was in the hands of social revolutionaries and that even the strengthening of the Generalitat Government during the autumn only resulted in a transfer of power from the Anarchists to the Communists. It is not surprising that early in December 1936 the extreme separatists of the Estat Català movement⁴ were accused of conspiring against the Generalitat, and that a week or two later it was rumoured that the Esquerra Party itself was prepared to negotiate a separate peace with General Franco in return for the complete independence of Catalonia, and in the hope that the French Government might be willing to guarantee Catalan independence in order to secure a buffer state between France and Nationalist Spain. Considering that the unity of Spain was one of the Nationalists' most cherished ideals, and that the left-wing organizations in Catalonia disliked the idea of a separate peace, the prospects for such negotiations were not very favourable, even if it could have been supposed that Signor Mussolini would be more willing to tolerate an independent Catalonia under a bourgeois-liberal régime than under a system of Soviets.⁵ Early in January 1937 President Companys, himself a member of the Esquerra Party, declared that the Catalans were

the natural allies of all the free forces of the Republic, that they were more closely attached than ever before to their brothers in the other Spanish countries, and that they would never make a separate peace, or accept any form of subjection to a foreign power.⁶

¹ See p. 51, above.

² See p. 93, above.

³ See p. 60, above.

⁴ See p. 30, above.

⁵ For Signor Mussolini's views on the establishment of a Soviet system in Catalonia see the *Survey for 1936*, p. 659, and the present volume, pp. 178-80, below.

⁶ *Le Temps*, 8th January, 1937.

About this time representatives of the Catalan Government visited Valencia to discuss the establishment of 'a Catalan state within a Federal Republic', and to propose 'that Catalonia should take a share in the foreign policy of the Republican Government' and that a Catalan army should be maintained under the high command of the Republican Government, which would also give it financial aid.¹ By March 1937 the Catalan People's Army was said to be about 75,000 strong, and the liaison between the Catalan and Republican armies was maintained by the Catalan Councillor for War sitting on the Supreme War Council of the Republic, and by each army sending a representative to the headquarters of the other.

The question of self-government was also being raised on behalf of other parts of Spain besides Catalonia. An autonomy statute for the region of Valencia was under consideration at the end of 1936, and on the 1st October of that year the Cortes had unanimously approved the Basque Statute which had been ratified by a plebiscite held on the 11th November, 1932.² Though the approval given by the Cortes could not actually be considered as final owing to the absence of a quorum, the Statute was immediately promulgated by the Basques. On the 10th October Don José Antonio Aguirre, leader of the Basque Nationalist Party, was elected President of the autonomous Basque State and took the oath of office under the traditional oak tree of Guernica. Señor Aguirre also acted as Prime Minister and Minister for Defence. His Cabinet, which took office next day, consisted of three other Basque Nationalists, three Socialists and one representative each from the Communists, Left Nationalists, Republican Union and Republican Left. A Basque delegation was sent to Barcelona in November in order that the new Government might keep in touch with the Catalan Generalitat, and in January 1937 Basque delegates, as well as Catalans, entered into negotiations at Valencia with regard to the status of their respective Governments.

In their declaration of policy³ the Basque Government had stated that they were a War Cabinet whose main aim was the achievement of victory, that they would work for a unified command and for the 'militarization' of the armed forces, and that they would be inexorable in maintaining order. They would not, however, interfere with individual or social rights or with freedom of religious worship; and religious associations would continue to exist as far as was permitted by the Constitution.⁴ They would work for social progress and would

¹ See *The Manchester Guardian*, 19th January, 1937.

² See p. 40 n., above.

³ See *Le Temps*, 9th October, 1936.

⁴ See p. 16, above.

facilitate the participation of workers in the management and profits of business, so long as this was not against the general interests of production as a whole, but they would protect the small traders and industrialists. They would encourage the distribution of land and would on all occasions consult the workers' organizations.

Indeed, the Basque Nationalists seem to have had no desire for a social revolution but to have aimed rather at the establishment of 'an ideal petty bourgeois co-operative society—something on the lines of Denmark' but based on the principles of the Papal Encyclical *Quadragesimo Anno* of the 23rd May, 1931.¹ In the field of internal politics they were in a strong position, as they held the key posts in the Government, and their trade union organization, the 'Solidaridad Vasca', which included 60 per cent. of the small-holding peasants as well as 45,000 industrial workers, still outnumbered the U.G.T. The Vizcayan Socialists also belonged to the more moderate wing of their party. The right-wing Socialist leader Don Indalecio Prieto was himself a native of Bilbao, and the younger party members were coming more and more under Communist influence. The general atmosphere is described as having been far less revolutionary than that in other parts of Spain; churches remained open and priests were not interfered with; and there was much less danger from 'Dawn Patrols' and 'gangsters of the revolution'. The worst outbreaks of violence against the Spanish Nationalists in the Basque country occurred in September 1936 and January 1937, when, each time under provocation of air raids, the mob broke into prisons,² but as a rule law and order were well maintained.

Political developments in the Central Republican Government and in the Castilian-speaking parts of Republican Spain as a whole were not unlike those in Catalonia, except that here Anarcho-Syndicalist influence was not so strong, and that the situation was more closely affected by events on the western and northern fronts. In consequence of defeats suffered by the Republicans in August³ Señor Giral's Government resigned, and on the 4th September Señor Largo Caballero, leader of the U.G.T. and of the more extreme wing of the Socialist Party, became Premier and also Minister for War; Señor Álvarez del Vayo, Minister for Foreign Affairs; Señor Negrín, Minister for Finance; and Señor Prieto, Minister for the Navy and Air. In all, there were six Socialists in the new Cabinet, two Communists, two representatives of the Republican Left, and one

¹ See *The Manchester Guardian*, 18th February, 1937; also *Le Journal des Nations*, 7th April, 1937.

² See pp. 86-7, above.

³ See pp. 55-6, above.

representative each from the Catalan Esquerra, the Basque Nationalists and the Republican Union. To a certain extent the new Cabinet represented a swing to the left, but it was much less revolutionary than Señor Largo Caballero would have liked, and his personal and political opponent Señor Prieto had obtained a strong position in it. Moreover, the very fact that the new Cabinet was more representative than its bourgeois predecessor gave it more power to deal with the semi-independent left-wing organizations, so that its entry into office may even be said to have foreshadowed the coming turn to the right.

The leaders of the C.N.T. had not felt able to accept Señor Largo Caballero's invitation to enter the Government, owing to their tradition of not taking part in political action, but they were willing to support it in its essential task of winning the war, on condition that the advantages secured by the workers in Catalonia and the Levante were respected. Towards the end of October the Anarcho-Syndicalists were reported to be reconsidering this decision, partly because they hoped in this way to gain access to the Russian stores of armaments, though this hope proved, on the whole, deceptive. On the other hand, the inclusion of the Anarcho-Syndicalists in the Republican Government is said to have been one of the conditions stipulated by the Russians before they agreed to send armaments and technicians. Finally, on the 4th November, when the Nationalists were no more than a few miles from Madrid, Señor Largo Caballero formed a new Government which included four representatives of the C.N.T. as well as six Socialists, two Communists and six representatives of the other Popular Front parties. Señores Largo Caballero, Álvarez del Vayo, Negrín and Prieto continued to hold their former posts.

Two days later the Republican Government were making a hurried retreat to Valencia,¹ and in the general alarm and confusion the Anarcho-Syndicalists gained the upper hand in many parts of the country. Even at Tarancón, on the Madrid-Valencia road, an Anarchist picket took it upon itself to turn back all fugitives from Madrid, and would have stopped the members of the Government themselves if it had not been for the energetic protests of Señor Álvarez del Vayo. The chief officials of the U.G.T. had a similar experience at Cuenca. Nevertheless, when once the Republicans had been saved from immediate defeat by the arrival of the International Brigades and the Russian armaments and technicians, the Anarcho-Syndicalists' chance of seizing power and bringing the campaign to disaster in their own way was over. A demonstration at Valencia was put down with heavy losses thanks to Communist machine-guns, the Anarcho-

¹ See p. 59, above.

Syndicalists in Cuenca were subdued by police work carried on by the Unified Socialist Youth, and those in Tarancón, it is even said, by air bombing.

The Anarcho-Syndicalist wave which was now breaking so noisily was in fact already being followed by another and more powerful wave which seemed likely to carry the Communists far past the Anarcho-Syndicalists up the slope mounting towards power. In the Castilian-speaking provinces, as in Catalonia, Russian intervention had given the orthodox Communists powerful foreign backing as well as private stocks of arms; and the most efficient corps in the Republican Army, the so-called Fifth Regiment, which included the International Brigades, was under Communist leadership. The political ascendancy which the Communists were now establishing took various forms. They were particularly successful in bringing about the union of their organizations with other left-wing groups, and in this way they secured a strong influence over the Unified Socialist Youth in Castilian-speaking Spain as well as over the P.S.U.C. in Catalonia. Party membership had also increased, but more among the rich peasants, officials and bourgeoisie than among the proletariat. This was not surprising, since the Communists' avowed aim at this time was 'the defence of the democratic republic'¹ (though they were continually indulging in a most undemocratic police terrorism and heresy-hunting, especially against 'Trotskyists').² They insisted that Spain was going through a revolution which was more comparable to that of 1789 than to that of 1917, and it was widely understood that they were the most conservative section of the movement as regarded social and economic changes, and the most efficient in organizing the war. By the beginning of 1937 their views were almost identical with those of the Republican Left and Republican Union parties and of the right-wing Socialists, and they were indeed believed to be working for a right-wing coalition which would

¹ See the *Journal des Nations*, 14th January, 1937, and a report presented to the Central Committee of the Spanish Communist Party by the General Secretary, Señor Díaz, on the 5th March, 1937. An abridged text of this report was published in *The Communist International*, vol. 14, no. 4, pp. 1000-10.

² See Borkenau, *op. cit.*, pp. 251 *seqq.* Units of the Russian State Security Department (the new official title of the O.G.P.U.) were also busy in Spain. They worked hand-in-glove with the Spanish and the other foreign Communists, and maintained prisons and courts of justice of their own, the very existence of which was sometimes unknown to the Republican authorities. Many people were believed to have disappeared in this way. In the summer of 1937, however, when the defeat of the extreme revolutionaries had left the moderate parties more at liberty to resist the Communists, the Central Republican Government began to close down the O.G.P.U. prisons and to send the foreign police agents out of the country.

overthrow Señor Largo Caballero's Government. As it was, the existing Republican Government and the various forces which it represented were already beginning to carry out many of the changes desired by the Communists. The Army and Police were being reorganized,¹ and drastic action was being taken against the 'uncontrollables', a convenient term which was applied to 'gangsters of the Revolution' and also to any individuals or local groups whose views on the social revolution differed too widely from those of the Government. The town and village committees often came under this heading, and a decree approved by the Valencia Government at the end of December 1936 provided that they should be replaced by municipal councils.

Many of these conflicts between extremists and moderates arose out of the economic situation. This was becoming increasingly serious now that stocks of goods, credit facilities and means of producing ready money were becoming exhausted. In their quest of home-produced food supplies the Republicans found themselves cut off from those parts of Spain which produced the most grain, meat and dairy produce and much of the olive oil. Catalonia and the other provinces of the Mediterranean coast region had a surplus of fruit, vegetables and manufactured goods, but did not ordinarily produce enough food for their own inhabitants, and they now had a large number of refugees to feed as well. Moreover, while the war and the blockade were in themselves enough to dislocate internal and external trade, the Republicans had at the same time to keep their heads above a torrent of social and economic experiments, some inspired by Communism and Socialism, and others by Anarchism of the most uncompromising kind.

Industrial and commercial undertakings were to a great extent 'collectivized', that is to say, placed under the management of workers' committees. In some cases the former managing staff disappeared, in some they stayed on under the supervision of the committee, or in the position of technical advisers. In other cases profits were shared without any change being made in the management. Foreign businesses might be made subject to a form of collectivization which left them a certain freedom of action, on condition that all payments were approved by the workers' committee.² This, however, was not always carried out. Certain undertakings, especially those producing war material, were taken over by the Government, but this practice was more common in Castilian-speaking Spain than

¹ See p. 46, above.

² See *The Manchester Guardian*, 6th August, 1936.

in Catalonia, and here again it was the Communists who preferred control by the state and the Anarcho-Syndicalists who preferred control by the workers. It may be imagined that this state of things caused many difficulties between the Government and the trades unions, and also between workers belonging to rival unions who were employed in the same 'collectivized' undertakings.

The agrarian question was proving just as difficult. The large estates had been expropriated by direct action, without waiting for legal procedure, and were now being managed by the local committees, or by the municipalities, or by the Government organizations for administering agrarian reform. Very often the same labourers went on working for these new masters for much the same wages as before. On other farms they would share the profits, or, if the community were trying to do without money, they would share the produce and the goods for which it might be exchanged with the towns. It had not yet been decided whether the large estates should be divided up or be permanently 'collectivized', or (which was a much more serious question) whether the peasants should be allowed to work their own small farms independently if they so wished. In Eastern Spain and Catalonia, in contrast to Estremadura and Andalusia, the peasants held a much greater proportion of the land themselves, and here they often resisted attempts to redistribute their own farms or to dictate to them as to how these should be cultivated. On several occasions fighting broke out between peasants and local committees backed by revolutionary militia from the towns. The Communists were again to the fore among those who opposed this extreme policy of 'collectivization'. In fact they were now actively protecting the Spanish equivalent of those *kulaks* whom their Russian comrades had been just as actively exterminating a few years before. A dispute of the same kind between the C.N.T. and the left-wing Socialists on the one side and the peasants and the right-wing Socialists, including the Communists, on the other, seriously hindered the work of the Central Government agency for the export of agricultural produce. There were also difficulties over the provisioning of the towns, especially in Barcelona, where the *laissez-faire* methods of the Generalitat Councillor in charge of economic affairs, who happened to be one of the least revolutionary of the Socialists, kept supplies lower and prices higher than usual for some weeks. Finally, the political crisis which these economic disputes had helped to produce had an untoward counter-effect on the economic situation and on the various organizations which produced and transported war material and civilian supplies.

Though for a time it seemed as though the Communists were well on the way to establishing themselves as the strongest element in the Popular Front, there was much less reason to suppose that Republican Spain would at the same time become a dutiful copy of Stalin's U.S.S.R. An attitude of reserve towards foreigners and foreign influences had been a frequently recurring trait in the Spanish character,¹ and it was perhaps significant that the set-back which the Communists received in January 1937 originated in a dispute over the position of the International Brigades and their commander General Kleber. Having succeeded so well in resisting the Nationalist attacks on Madrid, General Kleber now wished to take the offensive, but General Miaja and other Republican leaders were afraid that it was still too early to take this risk. They were also somewhat jealous of the fame which the foreign commander and his brigades had won for themselves, just as the Nationalist leaders were afterwards reported to have felt about the Italians. Disputes over strategy, and a dislike of playing second fiddle to foreigners, seem to have been sufficiently strong motives to cause the right-wing Socialists and the Republican parties to join forces for a moment with the Anarcho-Syndicalists and the left-wing Socialists. The Communists were believed to be preparing another Government crisis which might have given them the opportunity of carrying out a more or less anti-revolutionary *coup d'état*, and with the help of the International Brigades they would probably have been strong enough to take over the Government by force. Without the support of their former right-wing allies, however, they could hardly have maintained themselves in power and at the same time carried on the war.

On this account the Communists were obliged to give way. General Kleber lost his command and even had to go into hiding, the Communist Fifth Regiment was merged in the regular Army, and an entirely Spanish Junta de Defensa was formed in Madrid. The fall of Málaga and the Nationalist advance on the Jarama¹ which followed so closely on the disappearance of General Kleber do not seem to have frightened Señor Largo Caballero's Government into offering concessions to the Communists in return for Russian help. Indeed, on the 20th February it was announced that the Russian Ambassador, Monsieur Rosenberg, who had played such an active part during the last three or four months, had been recalled. His place was taken by Monsieur Gaikis, the Counsellor of Embassy, and Russian help was still given, but it was now more than ever unlikely that Spain would become a Soviet protectorate. Señor Largo Cabal-

¹ See pp. 64-5, above.

lero's declaration of the 26th February that he would not remain in office unless his position as leader of the Popular Front coalition was absolutely secure, was not followed by his resignation, and early in March 1937 a Congress of the Spanish Communist Party voted in favour of giving full support to his Government.

The more even balance of forces which was reached in this way did not, at any rate for the time being, make for greater disintegration or inefficiency. The tide of opinions and events was still in favour of the policy, so strongly supported by the Communists, of 'organizing for victory' by strengthening and unifying the Army, by maintaining order and by extending Government control over war industry and private stocks of arms. The Popular Front organizations of course still found it very unpalatable to give up any of their former independence, but useful changes were actually being brought about, though the tangible results achieved might look rather small in comparison with the imposing demonstrations in favour of unity.

For instance, action continued to be taken against the 'uncontrollables'. Political organizations were ordered to inform the Department of Security how many of their members carried pistols, and it was made known that all party and trades union cards issued since the 19th July, 1936, would be examined. When the Anarchist Iron Column, on its return to Valencia from the Teruel front, preferred to fight rather than accept 'militarization', it was defeated with many casualties. Force also had to be used against Cullera, a small town near Valencia, and other places where the committees had been defying the Government and refusing to give way to the new municipalities. In the field of agrarian policy, the Catalan Government suspended the compulsory application of their 'collectivization' decree of the summer before,¹ and the Valencia Government seem to have adopted a similar policy. Señor Largo Caballero himself declared in March 1937 that there would be no objection to a family managing its own farm and even working it with the help of a few labourers.² Even the economic situation improved to a certain extent now that the acute administrative paralysis of the weeks just before the political crisis was no longer added to the difficulties of organizing the transport services and the supply of coal, oil and food. Nevertheless it may be suggested that one of the most valuable contributions to the Republican successes in March 1937 was made by the Communist leaders, both Russian and Spanish, who were willing to put their technical advisers and pilots

¹ See p. 92, above.

² See *Le Temps*, 12th March, 1937.

at the disposal of an entirely Spanish command, and to the foreign Communist battalions who helped to check the Nationalist advance at its most critical stage.

After the Battle of Guadalajara¹ the balance of parties was once again disturbed. This time the left wing of the Popular Front was the dissatisfied minority which eventually had to give way. The Anarcho-Syndicalists were still represented in the Republican and Catalan Governments, and their leaders had on several occasions instructed them to obey the orders of these Governments and were even helping to subdue the 'uncontrollables', though Anarchism in its purest form, as well as criminal tendencies, had qualified a remarkably large number of Anarcho-Syndicalists for earning this bad name. Nevertheless, these same leaders, together with the Anarcho-Syndicalist Press and committees, were still declaring that the social revolution must come first, that the Government departments ought to be controlled by the trades unions, and that the arms received from abroad ought to be given direct to the workers. They also refused to admit that it was desirable to protect the middle class or to conciliate international opinion by restoring order and slowing down the pace of the revolution. The political group standing closest to the Anarcho-Syndicalists were the left-wing Socialists, whose strength lay more in the U.G.T. than in the Socialist Party. Negotiations had been carried on ever since the winter for closer co-operation between the C.N.T. and U.G.T., and considerable progress was reported to have been made in Asturias and Aragon, but the question at once arose of whether the Anarcho-Syndicalist leaders would agree to a policy more akin to that of Señor Largo Caballero and to that extent more distasteful to their own extremists, or whether they would bring the U.G.T. over towards their more revolutionary way of thinking.

It was not at all surprising that the next trial of strength between right-wing and left-wing Republicans should have come in Catalonia, where Anarcho-Syndicalism was still powerful but where a strong anti-extremist bloc had been formed in which the regionalist and bourgeois types of Catalan could join with those who were Socialists or Communists by conviction. Moreover, the Aragon front had been quiet for many months past, and the Nationalists were still more than a hundred miles from Barcelona and were not yet within range even of the borders of Catalonia. This was a sufficient relief from external pressure to make Spanish political factions feel perfectly free to fight each other. Indeed, it was afterwards alleged that Anarcho-Syndi-

¹ See pp. 65-6, above.

alist officials of the Generalitat had been refusing to carry out decrees of which they disapproved, especially where the surrender of arms was concerned. There had, however, been a revival of interest in the war during February and March, considerable enthusiasm had been shown during a special recruiting week for the Catalan People's Army, and it was over the organization of the Army that the conflict between revolutionaries and realists came to a head.

On the 27th March the representatives of the U.G.T. resigned from the Generalitat Council as a protest against the refusal of the Anarcho-Syndicalist Minister for Defence to apply to Catalonia a mobilization decree issued from Valencia. Negotiations for the reconstruction of the Council went on for three weeks, and though a provisional ministry of only six members was appointed on the 3rd April it never took office. The U.G.T. insisted that members of the new Government must promise to carry out all decrees approved by its predecessor, especially those concerning mobilization, unification of the police and the disarming of the mob, while these same questions (together with economic and agrarian affairs) figured in a seven-point programme put forward by the Anarcho-Syndicalists with the intention of staying the retreat from the revolution. In the Council formed by the outgoing Premier, Señor Tarradellas, on the 19th April the proportion of seats held by each party was the same as before, but the possibility of a compromise being reached was as far off as ever.

Things were not made easier by the existence of an even more revolutionary fringe of the Popular Front consisting of the Libertarian Youth, and a group of F.A.I. extremists called the Friends of Durruti, together with members of the P.O.U.M. who shared the Anarchists' desire for revolution before victory, and whose party was already waging a losing fight against the P.S.U.C. Feeling ran dangerously high in the smaller Catalan towns as well as in Barcelona, and a crescendo of murders and political affrays led up to the killing of Don Roldán Cortada, secretary to one of the U.G.T. Councillors, on the 25th April, and a few days later of Antonio Martí, the leading Anarchist in Puigcerdá, a large village on the Franco-Catalan frontier. The fact that customs guards in the service of the Valencia Government had just been trying to put an end to the *de facto* independence of Señor Martí and his committee, illustrates yet another aspect of the crisis—namely that the Valencia Government seemed able to exercise more authority over Catalonia now than earlier in the year. This tendency seems to have been much more disagreeable to the Anarcho-Syndicalists than to the once so passionately

regionalist Esquerra. When, towards the end of April, the Generalitat ordered that the People's Courts should be brought into line with those in the rest of Spain, it was the 'uncontrollables', though not apparently the responsible leaders of the C.N.T., who complained that the P.S.U.C. and its allies were carrying out a counter-revolution with the backing of the Valencia Government.

The storm broke when several members of the C.N.T. were arrested in connexion with the murder of Señor Cortada and when one more attempt was made to enforce the surrender of private stocks of arms. On the afternoon of the 3rd May, C.N.T. men who occupied the Barcelona telephone building turned their weapons against the Assault Guards who had been sent to disarm them. Thereupon Anarchists and P.O.U.M. attacked the police throughout Barcelona, and members of parties that were more friendly to the Government joined in on the other side. The revolutionaries had their own machine-guns and tanks, fighting went on for four days and the number of deaths was estimated officially at 213—unofficial estimates being twice or even four times as large. The Barcelona revolutionaries were supported by risings in Tarragona and Gerona, and Anarchist militia turned the tables on the Valencian police and regained control of the Franco-Catalan frontier.

The Libertarian Youth and the Friends of Durruti were, however, the only sections of the Anarcho-Syndicalist movement which backed the rising. The leaders of the C.N.T. decided by an overwhelming majority not to give their support to any armed rising as long as the civil war lasted. They also joined with leaders of other parties in appealing for peace and in trying to negotiate an anti-Fascist compromise; and a C.N.T. representative was included in the emergency directorate of four which replaced the Cabinet, though the Defence Ministry now went to the U.G.T. while the Esquerra still held the Ministry of Public Order.

Meanwhile, on the 6th May, acting under the terms of the Autonomy Statute, the Central Republican Government had taken over the control of all the Catalan public security services. They proceeded to appoint their own nominees to such key-positions as chief of police at Barcelona, and they ordered that all the troops on the Aragon front should be reorganized as the Fourth Division of the Republican Army, under the command of a Castilian officer, General Pozas. Their intervention was not, however, drastic enough to satisfy the right wing of the Popular Front. The 6,000 Assault Guards who were sent to Barcelona arrived after the fighting had died down, but while armed revolutionaries were still in control of

part of the suburbs and also of the offices of the Libertarian Youth, the P.O.U.M. and some of the trades unions. The Assault Guards orders, however, were not to subdue these revolutionaries but to keep the combatants separated and to forestall reprisals. Indeed, Señor Largo Caballero's leniency towards the extremists was one of the main causes of the overthrow of his Government a few days later.

It was afterwards alleged by the Valencia Government, and even more positively by the Communists, that Nationalist agents had helped to instigate the Barcelona troubles and that Anarchists and the whole 'Trotskyist' party had, both on this occasion and for many months before, been guilty of sabotage, wilful slackness and inefficiency, espionage, conspiracies to murder, and other criminal and treasonable activities.¹ The evidence brought forward and the method of attack were both reminiscent of the witch-hunt which was being carried on just then in the Soviet Union.² As to the amount of truth in the accusations, Nationalists certainly had been insinuating themselves into the revolutionary organizations, and though some of them may have been only looking for camouflage, it is quite possible that others were *agents provocateurs* and conspirators, since the more the Republicans fell out with one another the more General Franco would have reason to rejoice. But though individual Anarchists and 'Trotskyists' may well have had dealings with Nationalists, this does not necessarily mean that either movement was collectively guilty of treason. The whole history of the extreme Anarchists and the P.O.U.M., and the spontaneous, chaotic nature of the Barcelona rising, both give the impression that on this occasion the extremists were making a last desperate attempt to carry out their revolutionary aims by revolutionary action against their increasingly powerful natural enemies the police and the orthodox Communists; and that the explosion would have come about in the same way, even if there had not been a single Nationalist *agent provocateur* left in Barcelona. Indeed, the Catalan Anarcho-Syndicalists retorted by spreading rumours that the right wing of the Popular Front, which was now the power behind the Negrín Government,³ was ready to accept an armistice or even a Nationalist-

¹ See George Soria, *Trotskyism in the service of Franco* (London, 1938, Lawrence and Wishart). Before the war, Catalan regionalists had often suspected that the Castilian Government and its officials encouraged Anarchist outrages in Barcelona in order to have an excuse for a repression which would hit home-rulers as well as social revolutionaries (see pp. 35-7, above).

² See the *Survey for 1937*, vol. i, pp. 12 *seqq.*

³ See p. 111, below.

Republican Government of Reconciliation imposed by Great Britain or other foreign Powers.

Now that they had made themselves responsible for keeping order in Catalonia, the Valencia Government set about disarming the irregular militias and removing unauthorized control posts from frontiers, roads and harbours. Once again, however, it was easier to announce the establishment of Government control than to put it into effect, and three months later, according to an estimate made by a Councillor of the Generalitat, the Anarcho-Syndicalists still possessed nearly 30,000 rifles.¹ Even allowing for an increase in the membership of the U.G.T., the Anarcho-Syndicalist trades unions were still a force to be reckoned with, in particular because of their control over the public services and the entire transport industry. But though the Anarcho-Syndicalists were still powerful, they were not all considered equally dangerous by the right wing of the Popular Front, and a distinction was still made between the 'uncontrollables' and the leaders and more moderate elements who were willing to dilute their Anarchist principles to some extent and who had not taken part in the Barcelona disturbances.²

There was no such inducement to be lenient to the P.O.U.M. The Valencia Government ordered it to be dissolved, and on the 16th June more than forty members of its Central Committee were arrested, as much for their alleged dealings with the enemy as for their part in the May disturbances. A large number of highly incriminating documents were said to have been found in the Peruvian Embassy in Madrid,³ and other plots which were subsequently brought to light by investigations in Barcelona, Gerona and elsewhere were alleged to have been fomented by 'Trotskyists'. Early in August it was reported that in Gerona Province alone four hundred members of the P.O.U.M. had been arrested.⁴ There were, however, none of the spectacular treason trials to which the Soviet Communists had become addicted. Socialist and Basque members of the Government, indeed, freely expressed their disbelief in the charges of treason against individual members of the P.O.U.M., though they approved, on political grounds, of the dissolution of the party. Señor Irujo, the Minister for Justice, secured the release of many of the prisoners

¹ See *The Times*, 19th August, 1937.

² For an account which finds room for the lighter side of relations between the 'uncontrolled elements' and the authorities see *The Manchester Guardian*, 15th July, 1937.

³ Extracts from these are published in Soria, *op. cit.*; but it should be remembered that this pamphlet has a strong Stalinist bias.

⁴ See *The Manchester Guardian*, 5th August, 1937.

in spite of strong Communist opposition. An event which helped to rouse the suspicions of non-Communist Ministers with regard to the authenticity of the charges was the disappearance from prison of Don Andrés Nin, the chief leader of the party, who for some months had been Minister for Justice in the Catalan Generalitat. Orthodox Communist and left-wing versions of the story agree that he was carried off by men dressed as officers of the regular Army, but they differ as to whether these were his friends or his murderers. According to one report his body was even said to have been found; but, a month or so later, Communist circles in Moscow were complaining that he was still at large and that Spaniards had not yet learnt how to deal with spies.¹

Other members of the left-wing opposition, beside the P.O.U.M., were affected by measures taken by the authorities during the summer and autumn of 1937. Some hundreds of Anarchists were reported to have been imprisoned, killed, or driven into exile, among them several men who had served on the revolutionary public security organizations; and it was said that the police were continually finding hidden stores of arms and of all kinds of loot: gold and silver, church vestments, share certificates and so on. The Press censorship had been tightened up after it had been transferred from the Department of Defence to that of Public Order, and from the 16th August onwards a ban was placed on the holding of political meetings throughout Catalonia.

The Catalan regionalists could to some extent console themselves for the new restrictions on Catalan autonomy by the thought that they were at the same time regaining some of the real power which they had lost to Socialists, Communists and Anarcho-Syndicalists. The latter were no longer represented on the Generalitat Government. They had accepted three seats in the Cabinet which was formed on the 29th June, but had almost immediately threatened to withdraw as a protest against the inclusion of Dr. Bosch Gimpera, Rector of Barcelona University. Similar tactics had proved effective in August 1936,² but this time President Companys insisted that the Anarcho-Syndicalists must enter the Cabinet on his terms or remain outside. They chose the latter of these alternatives, with the result that the Cabinet was reduced to three members of the Esquerra, three of the P.S.U.C. and one each from the Acció

¹ *Ibid.*, 15th September, 1937. This dissatisfaction on the part of the Communists may also have had some connexion with the steps which the Republican Government were taking to suppress the independent Russian O.G.P.U. units (see footnote on p. 99, above).

² See p. 90, above.

Catalana and Tenant Farmers' Party respectively. When the committees of the agricultural syndicates came up for re-election on the 25th July, a majority of votes in a majority of villages was won, not by the Anarcho-Syndicalists or even by the P.S.U.C, but by the Esquerra, whose programme had been based on the free organization of agriculture as opposed to compulsory 'collectivization'. An agrarian decree which was issued on the 14th August, and which was intended to remain in force until the end of the war, let it be understood that private property would be respected though controlled. Only the land which had been taken from Nationalists would be divided up, landless peasants would be exclusively entitled to have a share of it, and the new holdings might be worked by families or by co-operative groups. On the other hand, the opposition of the trades unions was still strong enough to prevent the Generalitat from extending its control over industry, even where the manufacture of munitions was concerned, or over transport and the other public services.

This latter question had been raised when the Republican Premier, Dr. Negrín, had visited Barcelona at the end of the summer; and the improvement of the Catalan munitions industries and the co-ordination of the public services of Catalonia with those of the rest of Republican Spain were understood to be among the motives which led the Republican Government to announce on the 31st October, 1937, that their administrative capital would be transferred to Barcelona.¹ After the first week in November, indeed, Barcelona may be said to have housed no less than four Governments, namely the Central Republican Government, the Generalitat (all departments of which continued to function as before), the exiled Basque Government and the Asturian Defence Committee. Towards the end of November the Republican Government announced that they intended soon to militarize transport and the war industries in order to remove them from the control of the syndicates, but this change does not actually seem to have been made before the end of the year.

The disturbances of the 3rd–6th May, 1937, in Barcelona had been followed, not much more than a week later, by a political crisis at Valencia. Nearly all the Popular Front organizations had complaints to make against the coalition which had been in office since November 1936. There was a demand for the reorganization of the Defence Ministry and the High Command, and there was a reaction against extremism on the part of a group of moderates who included President Azaña and the Basque Government. The Basques, in particular,

were urging that constitutional government and freedom of religious worship should be restored, and they also supported the Catalans in their objections to the restrictions which had just been imposed on Catalan self-government. The Communists, for their part, were dissatisfied with Señor Largo Caballero's work as War Minister and also with his Minister for the Interior, and they considered that the Barcelona revolutionaries had been treated much too leniently. It was they who precipitated the crisis by demanding that the C.N.T. should no longer continue to have four representatives in the Cabinet. After Señor Largo Caballero had resigned on the 15th May, opposition from the Socialist Party and Communists on the one side and the C.N.T. on the other prevented him from forming a Government in which he would have held the posts both of Premier and of Defence Minister with control over all the fighting services, while the U.G.T. would still have kept its representatives at the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and the Interior.

The new Government which was formed on the 17th May, 1937, was headed by a right-wing Socialist, Dr. Negrín, who also took charge of the Ministries of Finance and of Economy, Commerce and Industry. Señor Prieto, instead of losing the post of Minister for Air and Marine, was promoted to that of Defence Minister which Señor Largo Caballero had himself hoped to occupy. Another right-wing Socialist became Minister for the Interior, Señor Giral of the Republican Left became Foreign Minister, and the Catalans, Basques and Republican Union each had one representative in the Cabinet. The Ministries of Agriculture and Education went to the Communists, but neither of these could be considered one of the key posts in the new Government, in spite of their importance from the point of view of long-term developments.

Among those of Señor Largo Caballero's political allies who went out of office at this time was Don Luis Araquistain, Ambassador in Paris, who was succeeded by Don Ángel Ossorio y Gallardo, a Catholic and former Minister under the Monarchy. Señor Álvarez del Vayo resigned the post of Foreign Minister out of personal loyalty to Señor Largo Caballero, though his own political views had moved away from left-wing Socialism towards Communism. He still, however, remained at the head of the Political Commissars' department, and he was sent to represent his Government at the May session of the Council of the League of Nations,¹ as a sign that there was to be no change in Spanish foreign policy. A desire to make a good impression abroad, as well as a genuine tendency towards moderation, might also perhaps be traced

¹ See pp. 302-4, below.

in the appointment of a Basque Catholic, Señor Irujo, as Minister for Justice, and in the moderate tone of the new Government's declaration of policy.¹ According to this, their principal aims were 'to lead the popular masses to victory over rebels and invaders', to maintain order behind the lines, and 'to unify the command of military operations as well as the control of economic life'. They were also 'determined to maintain the closest contact with Parliament'. At the same time the hope was expressed that 'in the common interest' the trades union organizations would 'modify their attitude' towards the new Government.

The national committee of the U.G.T. seem to have been willing from the first to give their unconditional support to Señor Negrín, but Señor Largo Caballero and the rest of the executive committee preferred to try to form an alliance with the C.N.T., who were also remaining in opposition. Early in August, at a time when considerable feeling had been aroused by the disappearance of Señor Nin,² Señor Largo Caballero arrived at Madrid accompanied by several leaders of the U.G.T. and let it be known that he was about to start a campaign for enlightening public opinion with regard to the faults of Señor Negrín's Government. There was, however, little chance of his preparing a united left-wing revolt. The P.O.U.M. had been completely put out of action by the June purge; a dispute between left-wing Socialists and Anarcho-Syndicalists still remained to be settled; and, in any case, the majority of the Anarcho-Syndicalist leaders would still have refused to support an armed rising during the civil war. On the contrary, there was a growing reaction against Señor Largo Caballero among his own former supporters. When the national committee of the U.G.T. appointed a new executive on the 1st October, Señor Rodriguez Vera was elected to the post of Secretary-General, which had been held up till then by Señor Largo Caballero, and another right-wing Socialist, Señor Gonzalez Peña, was elected to the post of Chairman.

While the extreme Socialists and Anarcho-Syndicalists were losing ground during the summer and autumn of 1937, the Communists had also met with reverses, though they continued to form a powerful group on the right wing of the Popular Front. On the 19th August the Communist and Socialist Parties had signed an agreement for closer co-operation and for a purge of 'spies, provocateurs, wreckers and the enemies of the people'; early in October Señor Gonzales Peña declared his approval of the official participation of Commu-

¹ Text in *The Manchester Guardian*, 19th May, 1937.

² See p. 109, above.

nists in the U.G.T.; and conversations were also said to have taken place between Communists and the leaders of the C.N.T. The agreement, including a compromise on economic policy, which was signed by all Popular Front organizations on the 10th October, was not, however, more to the advantage of the Communists than to that of other parties. Moreover, in the determination of the policy of the Central Republican Government itself, the influence of the right-wing Socialists and the bourgeois Republican parties appears to have outweighed that of the Communists in other questions besides the treatment of 'Trotskyists'.¹ For instance, the Communists wished to merge the Popular Front organizations into a single party, but this suggestion was criticized by Dr. Negrin himself, in a speech broadcast at the end of October, as a rigid framework more suitable to Salamanca than to Republican Spain. To take another example, the Communists would have preferred the Army to be a politically conscious organization, while Señor Prieto, at that time Minister for Defence, meant to train it to be loyal to the Republic but to have no political connexions. Officers were not allowed to spread political propaganda among their men, or even to attend party meetings, and on the 18th November Señor Álvarez del Vayo resigned from the post of chief political commissar and his propaganda department was abolished. The precautions which were taken to restrict the publicity given to Army leaders also suggest that the Government were afraid that a successful campaign might raise up would-be dictators of the Left instead of the Right.

The Republican Government were still insisting that they intended to pursue a moderate and democratic policy and that the existing Constitution provided for 'full respect for private property'. A statement made by Dr. Negrin to the Press on the 21st September, 1937, emphasized the point that there would be 'no nationalization or confiscation of foreign property . . . during or after the civil war. . . . After the war' the Republicans 'would need the aid of other countries to develop the great economic possibilities of their country. It would be a great error to take any action harmful to foreign interests.' Dr. Negrin also pointed out that the Government were still making payments on their internal and external debt.² The session of the Cortes on the 1st-2nd October also professed to be a step towards normal methods of Government. About 200 members were present, which was a considerably larger attendance than had

¹ See p. 108, above.

² See *The Manchester Guardian*, 22nd September, 1937. See also p. 173 n., below.

been secured at either of the two other war-time sessions, and among them were members of Señor Lerroux's Radical Party and of the Centre Party, including Señor Portela Valladares, who had been Premier in February 1936. Indeed, at least one Communist deputy rose up in protest against the presence of so many reactionaries.

The revulsion towards a more moderate régime did not, however, yet include religious toleration. This omission does not seem to have been due to the opposition of the Communists, whose newspaper, *Mundo Obrero*, was even reported to have been advocating the re-establishment of religious worship,¹ but to that of the extreme Socialists and Anarcho-Syndicalists. On the 8th August Señor Irujo, the Minister for Justice, had announced the Republican Government's decision to issue licences to Catholics to hold services in private, and on the 15th August Mass was celebrated in Madrid by Father Lobo, a well-known partisan of the Republican cause, and in Valencia in the quarters of the Basque Government. On the next Sunday many churches were said to have been reopened for worship throughout Republican Spain, but this concession seems soon to have been withdrawn, if it was ever granted at all. Shortly afterwards the number of services held privately appears to have been restricted by order of the Vatican, which had found out that many of the priests licensed by the Government to conduct these services had been condemned by their bishops for their Republican sympathies, and which had sent instructions to Spain that no services might be held except according to the traditional ritual and by a duly authorized priest.²

(v) Political Changes in Nationalist Spain (July 1936–January 1938)

At the outbreak of the war the Nationalists found themselves in the paradoxical situation of entering on a crusade on behalf of authority and centralized government without being at all agreed as to what sort of authoritarian régime should be set up after their victory. Indeed, the point of view of a Navarrese traditionalist was almost as far removed from that of a Falangist as it was from

¹ See *The Times*, 19th May, 1937. Compare the following passage from Diaz, *op. cit.*, p. 1001:

It is necessary to destroy the economic and political power of the Church . . . To this end the property of the Church must be confiscated and nationalised. [This] does not by any means signify a fight against religion. On the contrary, only a republican and democratic Spain, a free and progressive Spain, will ensure freedom of religion in our country.

² See *The New York Times*, 21st September, 1937.

Marxism, and the question of the Monarchy was shelved by common consent. Moreover, when the war broke out there was no Nationalist leader holding a position comparable to that of Herr Hitler or Signor Mussolini on the eve of their accession to power. Don José Antonio Primo de Rivera, the leader of the Falangists, was in prison and was afterwards shot by the Republicans; Señor Calvo Sotelo had already been assassinated,¹ and General Sanjurjo, who might also have been expected to play a leading part, was killed in an aeroplane accident on the 20th July while on his way back from exile in Portugal.

Several weeks passed before the question of leadership was settled. On the 25th July it was announced that General Cabanellas, who had been in command at Saragossa, was forming a Provisional Government at Burgos consisting of four other Generals and two Colonels. The Burgos Junta from the first included General Mola, the commander of the Nationalist forces in Northern Spain, but General Queipo de Llano, the master of Seville, was said to have refused for a time to recognize its orders. General Franco, who was now in charge of the extremely important campaign in the south-west, became a member of the Junta in the first week of August, and on the 1st October he was invested with the title of Commander-in-Chief of the Nationalist Army and Chief of the Spanish State. Next day a decree was issued for the establishment of a Technical Council of State under which there would be committees dealing with finance, justice, trade and industry, agriculture, education and public works. Civilians served on the committees, but the Junta itself was still entirely made up of soldiers, and it was intended that when the war was over it should be succeeded by a military directorate at Madrid. In the second week in October military headquarters were moved to Salamanca, and the departments dealing with foreign affairs, propaganda and the Press were shortly afterwards transferred there as well. It was only the finance department and the other administrative services which remained under the management of the Technical Council at Burgos.

During the first eighteen months of the war the Nationalists continued to be faced with political difficulties and dissensions in the part of Spain which they occupied. The surviving Republicans in Nationalist territory might be conquered but were not necessarily converted; guerrilla bands were lurking in the mountains;² and Andalusia and Estremadura, in particular, gave the impression of being

¹ See pp. 21 and 48, above.

² See *The Manchester Guardian*, 18th March, 1937.

still unreconciled after many months of Nationalist occupation.¹ Many people, of course, never took sides either way and only wished that the war might come to an end as soon as possible, and, except in Navarre, an active support for the Nationalist cause was comparatively rare—such popular enthusiasm as there was being apt to die down between one victory and another.

Persistent rumours were being circulated at the end of March 1937 to the effect that conspiracies and mutinies in the Nationalist Army had been put down in Málaga and Algeciras and in Tatwān and other places in Spanish Morocco, and that the mutineers' motive had been dislike of foreign (and, above all, Italian) intervention quite as much as sympathy with the Republicans. Thereafter, at intervals during the summer, especially at the end of July and the beginning of August, Spaniards, Italians, Germans and Moors were reported to be fighting each other or mutinying against General Franco at Granada, Motril and Málaga and on the Aragon front. Reports of this kind may, of course, have had more foundation in Republican hopes than in real fact, but it was none the less true that far-reaching differences of opinion continued to exist behind the imposing façade of the 'national movement of salvation'.

The most important parties within the movement were the Falange Española, or National-Syndicalists, and the Traditionalists or Carlists, of which the Requetés were the combatant section. In addition, there were a number of other groups—such as the Alfonsoist party called the Renovación Española, and the Acción Popular of Señor Gil Robles—but these were soon merged in one or other of the two main rival currents of Traditionalism and National-Syndicalism. The Falangists and Traditionalists resembled one another in their desire for an authoritarian Government and a corporative form of administration and in their crusade against Marxism, Anarchism, Democracy, Regional Separatism, Freemasons and Jews. On the other hand, the underlying difference between them appeared even in their slogans: the Carlist 'God, Country and King' and the Falangist 'Country, Bread and Justice'.

The Traditionalists looked forward to a restoration of the old absolutist Monarchy and of the authority of the Church, as well as of other ideals and institutions to which they considered that Spain had owed her greatness in the past. They considered that the state must be based in the first place on definitely religious foundations,² and,

¹ See the *Frankfurter Zeitung*, 10th July, 1937.

² See a speech by the Carlist leader, Señor Fal Conde, quoted in *Le Temps*, 8th September, 1936.

though social justice was declared to be its second guiding principle, they do not seem to have insisted upon a detailed programme of reforms as the Falangists did. The Carlists, who were the strongest party among the Traditionalist type of Spanish Nationalist, had no claimant of their own to propose for the throne after the death of the last Carlist pretender, Don Alfonso Carlos, in September 1936, but it seemed probable that they would come to an agreement with the other Monarchist parties and that the most likely candidate would be the third son of King Alfonso, Don Juan. From the 15th August, 1936, onwards the Nationalists used the traditional red and yellow flag in place of the red, yellow and purple colours that had come in with the Republic, and though, at the end of July 1936, Prince Juan had met with a refusal from General Mola when he went to Burgos to offer his services to the Nationalist Army, other Bourbon princes fought on the Nationalist side during the war.

The Falangists, on the other hand, openly declared that Spain needed a social revolution. Their programme¹ announced that the future corporative state would not only develop Spanish economic resources but would never again allow the few to enjoy riches at the expense of the many. Private property and enterprise would be allowed, in so far as this was compatible with the interests of the community, but banking and public utility services would be nationalized; the rights of labour would be respected but class war would be forbidden; and housing and other social welfare schemes would be carried out in the country as well as in the towns. Moreover, cultivable land would be redistributed, and land which had been acquired or was being exploited in any way contrary to law might be expropriated without compensation. Their programme said nothing about the Monarchy, though their leaders let it be understood that they would not object to its being restored as 'a symbolic representation' of the National-Syndicalist state if, after the war was over, other Spaniards decided in favour of it. A possible source of conflict with the Traditionalists might also be traced in the paragraph which stated that

The movement incorporates Catholic consciousness—a glorious tradition which has been predominant in Spain—in the work of national reconstruction. Church and State will reach an agreement as to their respective functions, but no obstruction will be allowed, nor any form of activity which may impair the dignity of the state or the national integrity.

¹ Falange Española Tradicionalista, &c.: *Nacional-sindicalismo* (Saragossa, 1937).

The Falange was a middle-class movement which received little support from the Church or from the aristocracy. It was also a movement of the younger generation among the Nationalists, and found many supporters among the younger officers. If the Nationalists won the war it seemed possible that the lower middle classes and a certain number of the workers in Andalusia and the Levante might take up Falangism as a revolutionary movement of the South and East of Spain as opposed to the North. Such a movement would not, however, be likely to develop any federal or regional aims. Southern and Eastern Spaniards were not, as a rule, anxious for autonomy, but hoped on the contrary to impose their own ideas on Madrid.

The National-Syndicalist element in Falangism, like the left wing of the German Nazi Party, attracted Radicals who had formerly been 'Reds' or who might later on have become so, and after the war had broken out it was an easier and safer refuge for Moderates and Republicans than the Carlist movement. Under these circumstances Falange Española, which had not been a very large movement before the civil war, and many of the leaders of which were dead, or imprisoned in Republican Spain, was now becoming a more dangerous rival for the Traditionalists. If it had come to a fight, the Falangist volunteers would probably not have been a match for the Requetés in quality, in spite of their increased numbers and of the casualties suffered by the pick of the Requetés at the beginning of the war. Where political power was concerned, however, the Traditionalists soon began to complain that these rivals, whom they characterized as dangerous social revolutionaries, were gaining too much influence with General Franco, and that both he and they were little better than puppets in the hands of the German and Italian Governments. If this was so, it was rather a disillusionment for those Monarchists who, according to a speech made by one of their own leaders, Señor Goicoechea, in November 1937, had been visiting Italy as early as 1934 in order 'to secure the support not only of the Italian Government but also of the Fascist Party in the event of the outbreak of a civil war'.¹

It seems not improbable that the Falangist movement owed a good deal of its success to the close association of Nationalist Spain with Germany and Italy, either by direct influence on the one side or by flattering imitation on the other. Falangist policy had 'a good Press' in Italy and Germany, and was represented there as being more constructive than that of the Traditionalists. Nevertheless, it

¹ *The Manchester Guardian*, 4th December, 1937. See also footnote on p. 127, below.

looked as though German and Italian support was not being concentrated on any single political faction within the Nationalist movement but was being given, first and foremost, to General Franco himself, whose Government, so long as it was backed by the Army, served to link up these factions and even to exercise some authority over them. The Germans are also reported to have recognized that General Mola was by far the ablest Spanish General and to have considered his sudden death in June 1937 to be a serious loss to the Nationalist cause.

Whether or not German and Italian support had been of advantage to General Franco in other ways than in that of helping him to bring troops across from Morocco to win battles in Estremadura,¹ his rise to power was one of the most important political developments on the Nationalist side in the first three months of the war.² He had not yet, however, got rid of all possible rivals. In the first place there were the Monarchists, Clericals and other Traditionalists who had hoped to maintain their own provisional Government at Burgos and who objected to his having transferred the lion's share of the administration to Salamanca. Then there was another unruly Nationalist centre at Seville, which was the capital of a region with great natural resources and the largest city in the hands of the Nationalists until they captured Bilbao. At this time Seville and Andalusia were being ruled (somewhat precariously as regards out-lying districts) by General Queipo de Llano, whose methods of government were as personal and violent as those of a nineteenth-century Latin-American dictator. His attitude towards General Franco is reported to have been more like that of a powerful feudal baron to his overlord than that of a General to his Commander-in-Chief, and among General Queipo de Llano's adherents the Generalissimo went by the disrespectful nickname of 'the Dwarf of Salamanca'.

General Franco was not, indeed, an outwardly remarkable or picturesque figure, and he was not very rich in the myth-making power which is one of the most valuable arts of Dictatorship. As far as rival leaders and contending factions were concerned, however, he was in a strong position. Apart from any backing that he may have received from abroad, he enjoyed the advantage—which could hardly be overestimated in a régime that at least professed to be authoritarian—of combining in his person the headship of the State with the supreme command of a professional Army which had just been proving extremely effective against an amateur political

¹ See p. 52, above.

² See p. 57, above.

militia. Later on, his generalship was good enough to win a series of long-drawn-out campaigns against Republican forces some of which were better organized than others, though all of them were worse armed than his. In politics he seems to have shown a short-term ingenuity which helped to prevent the Nationalist movement from disintegrating while the war was still going on, but which did not prove, in itself, that he could do work of lasting value as a statesman.

Neither wing of the Nationalist movement could claim that General Franco had identified himself with it rather than with its rival. He was sometimes reported to be a Monarchist at heart and to be drawn towards the right wing by the influence of his wife, but his public declarations of policy were much closer to those of the Falangists, though not quite so radical. He more than once expressed the view that the military Dictatorship should be maintained after the end of the war until the country should have regained confidence and should be able to decide for itself whether it preferred a Monarchy (probably under Prince Juan) or a Republic;¹ but that if the Monarchy were restored it 'must be very different from the Monarchy which fell in 1931'.² In his eyes national unity was 'an intangible dogma. Arrangements' might 'be made for legitimate administrative autonomies or specifically local liberties', but Basque and Catalan separatisms were 'artificial movements with which the public is not in sympathy'.³ He hoped that Spain would become 'one great family', without 'plutocrats or proletarians',⁴ in a corporative state influenced by German and Italian models but specially adapted to the needs of Spain. Schools and universities would be encouraged, but were henceforth to teach Spanish traditions instead of class hatred. The power of Jews and Freemasons was to be broken, but religious affairs were to be dealt with in 'that great and comprehensive spirit that allowed, when the unity of our nation was being wrought, mosque and synagogue to stand open in accordance with the spirit of a Christian state'.⁵

With regard to foreign policy, General Franco repeatedly declared that, though the Nationalists would maintain an intimate friendship with those Powers which had helped them, they would cease to be

¹ See *The Sunday Chronicle*, 18th June, 1937, and *The Sunday Times*, 14th November, 1937.

² Quoted from a statement published in *A.B.C.*, 18th July, 1937, and cited in *The Times*, 19th July, 1937.

³ See *The Times*, 18th June, 1937.

⁴ See *The Observer*, 14th March, 1937.

⁵ See *The Daily Telegraph*, 23rd April, 1937.

Nationalists if they mortgaged or gave away a single square centimetre of territory.¹ In an interview given to the correspondent of *Le Journal*² in June 1937, when he was just conquering Vizcaya and was about to occupy Bilbao, he insisted particularly that he had always looked upon friendship with Great Britain as the foundation of his policy; that he had no sinister designs against France, but would propose a Franco-Spanish non-aggression pact as soon as all European states had recognized his Government, and that Spain would even return to her place in the League of Nations and work for European reconciliation.

On the side of the Nationalists as well as on that of the Republicans, the Spanish tendency to disunion was one of the chief stumbling-blocks; and here General Franco succeeded better than the Governments at Madrid, Valencia and Barcelona in producing at least an appearance of unity. His first step was to discipline all the Nationalist militias and put them under the authority of officers of the regular Army. He then set about the amalgamation of the political parties. The Monarchist Legion was incorporated into the Carlist movement; Señor Gil Robles' party was dissolved and its militia was incorporated into the Army; and discontent among the partisans of a radical Falangist leader called Davila was dealt with severely. On the 19th April, 1937, General Franco signed a decree³ uniting the Falangists and Carlists in a single political group to be called the Falange Española Tradicionalista y de las J.O.N.S.⁴ The new organization had General Franco himself for its leader, in his capacity as head of the state. It was eventually also to be governed by a secretariat or political committee and by a national council which was to advise the head of the state on any questions which he might lay before it. All other political parties were dissolved. The Falangist militia and the Requetés were amalgamated into a single national militia, but were still allowed to keep their special uniforms and other distinctive badges. Other volunteer forces were to be incorporated into the new national militia, which was to be an auxiliary service of the Army under the supreme command of the head of the state. It was to be commanded by a General of the regular Army, assisted by two army officers belonging to the Requetés and the Falangist militia and by two political assessors.

The decree of the 19th April was obviously to the advantage of

¹ See the *Corriere della Sera*, 14th July, 1937.

² Quoted in the *Frankfurter Zeitung*, 14th June, 1937.

³ Extracts from the decree were published in *Le Temps*, 21st April, 1937.

⁴ The letters J.O.N.S. stand for Juventudes de Ofensiva Nacional-sindicalista.

General Franco, and it was also to the advantage of the Army in so far as it increased its control over the political militias. The Traditionalists received an assurance in the preamble of the decree that the Monarchy might eventually be restored if the Spanish people wanted it, but they were not at all satisfied with other provisions of the decree and complained more bitterly than before that foreign social revolutionary Fascism was being forced on them owing to the influence of the Germans and, to a still greater degree, of the Italians.¹ On the other hand, the Falangists themselves were dissatisfied with the new arrangement, though at first sight it might seem very favourable to them, for twenty-six points of their own programme were adopted, without alteration, as the programme of the new party (the twenty-seventh point had expressed disapproval of co-operation with other parties). However, they appear to have felt that the change meant the end of the genuine Falangist and National-Syndicalist movement. Again, when the political committee was appointed at the end of April, the younger Falangists and Traditionalists both complained that it was too closely connected with the 'old gang' of party politicians.

A week or two later a serious conflict broke out between the Falangists and General Franco, and on the 11th May it was announced that Don Manuel Hedilla, who had acted as leader of the Falange from the arrest of Don José Antonio Primo de Rivera until the 19th April, had been relieved of his post on the political committee. At the same time the committee issued a decree ruling out interference by the state in the internal affairs of the movement and by the movement 'in functions appertaining to the executive authority', and thereby calling in question the doctrine, held by some Falangists, that there ought to be a complete identity of party and state.² According to some reports the immediate cause of Señor Hedilla's fall was his having demanded, not without threats, that he should be made commander of the national militia. Another story, not at all out of keeping with Spanish political technique, Nationalist or Republican, relates that some of the radical Falangists had tried to deal a decisive blow to their powerful enemies on the Nationalist right wing by taking advantage of anti-Italian feeling and presenting themselves as the champions of a Nationalism that really would preserve Spain for the Spaniards. The only result was that they—though apparently not the Falangist movement as a whole—lost the friendship of their foreign well-wishers without winning enough sup-

¹ See *The Manchester Guardian*, 23rd April, 1937.

² See *The Times*, 12th May, 1937.

port amongst the people, the political leaders and the Army to gain the upper hand over the Traditionalists and over General Franco. At the end of May a new outbreak of disturbances caused by Falangists was reported to be the reason for the closing of the Franco-Spanish frontier along the Bidassoa on the 29th–30th of that month. By that time several hundred or even a thousand Falangists were said to be in prison, and reports differed as to whether Señor Hedilla himself had been sentenced to death and reprieved or whether he and forty-eight others had been shot without trial.

While the Falangists were lamenting that General Franco had 'trodden on the leaders of the Falange as though they were worms'¹ and that he cared nothing for social reform, the right wing were hoping that General Mola, after his expected victory at Bilbao, would place himself at the head of another movement of opposition to General Franco and the foreigners. After General Mola's sudden death on the 3rd June, however, there was no outstanding leader to take his place. General Davila, who had been a friend and political ally of his, was transferred from the Presidency of the Technical Junta at Burgos to succeed him as commander of the Northern Army, and the new President of the Burgos Junta was General Gomez Jordana, who was one of General Franco's own henchmen.

The position of the different Nationalist groups with regard to each other remained more or less the same until the end of the year; but the length of time which elapsed before the publication of the constitution of the new Falangist-Traditionalist party or the appointment of its National Council suggests that all friction between them was not at an end. By the terms of the new constitution, which was published on the 5th August, the party was to constitute a sort of state within the state with its own administration for foreign affairs, Press and propaganda, social welfare, national militia, trades unions, and so on. General Franco was once again declared to be the leader of the party, who was 'responsible only to God and to history' and was invested with an exclusive right to nominate his own successor. The fighting services also gained a point against the political movements in the provision by which all officers and non-commissioned officers of the land, sea and air forces automatically entered the Falange Española Tradicionalista as full members. Several more months went by before the National Council was appointed. For a time it was believed that a Government might soon be formed consisting of technical experts and administrators rather

¹ See extracts from articles by a Jugoslav journalist quoted in *The Manchester Guardian*, 19th July, 1937.

than of politicians, Falangists or Traditionalists. Among the candidates suggested were Generals Gomez Jordana and Martinez Anido and several civilians who, like these Generals, had worked under General Primo de Rivera.

The next announcement of changes in the Nationalist administration appeared on the 21st October. Besides defining the powers of the National Council, a new decree¹ which was issued on that date gave a list of its members, but the decree seems to have been amended and the list revised before the solemn inauguration of the Council took place on the 2nd December at the monastery of Las Huelgas near Burgos. The Falangists could congratulate themselves on the appointment of one of their leaders, Señor Fernandez Cuesta, as Secretary-General of the National Council.² The Falangists were also said to have secured the exclusion of some of the Monarchists from the Council. Nevertheless, the fifty councillors included Traditionalists, former members of Señor Gil Robles' party, several army officers, among them Generals Queipo de Llano, Gomez Jordana and Davila, and, rather surprisingly for a 'totalitarian' state, no less than three women. It was stated that General Franco was to nominate all twelve members of the executive committee of the party instead of only half of them, but it is not clear whether the appointments were actually made.

It was not until the 31st January, 1938, that a Constitution for the Nationalist state was promulgated and a Government was appointed. General Franco assumed dictatorial powers as Prime Minister as well as head of the state and supreme commander of the armed forces, but the new arrangement was said to be 'without prejudice to any ultimate form of government' and 'subject to the constant influence of the national movement'.³ Both Falangists and Traditionalists were represented in the Government, and the decree of the 31st January, 1938, also dissolved the Technical Council and re-established the whole of the administration at Burgos. General Davila became Minister for Defence, Count Rodezno, the Carlist leader, became Minister for Justice, and Señor Fernandez Cuesta became Minister for Agriculture. Señor Serrano Suñer became

¹ See *Le Temps*, 24th October, 1937.

² According to a report which was published in the Paris journal *L'Oeuvre* on the 7th December, 1937, Señor Cuesta owed to foreign influence his selection in preference to Señor Serrano Suñer, a former member of the Acción Popular, who was General Franco's brother-in-law and the candidate favoured by the Army.

³ See *The Manchester Guardian*, 1st February, 1938; *Le Temps*, 2nd February, 1938.

Minister for the Interior and Propaganda, and Generals Gomez Jordana and Martinez Anido were appointed Vice-Premier and Foreign Minister and Minister for Public Order respectively. General Queipo de Llano was conspicuous by his absence from the Government, but he himself explained that this was by his own wish.¹ On the whole, the new Government's declaration of policy was in harmony with National-Syndicalist principles, since it announced the drafting of a labour charter and the adoption of a policy aiming at the redistribution of landed property;² but there was reason to suspect that the Government, unlike the Falangists, were reluctant to carry out any important measures of social legislation or agrarian reform.

¹ Three months later General Queipo de Llano was reported to be definitely in disgrace, but he seems afterwards to have been restored to favour. His eclipse coincided with, and was alleged to be connected with, reports of a period of tension between Germans and Italians as well as between the Nationalists and their 'Fascist' allies.

² See *Le Temps*, 4th February, 1938.

PART III

THE POWERS AND THE WAR

(i) The Interests and Motives of the Powers

(a) THE SITUATION OF SPAIN

In another context¹ it has been noticed that, for some two and a half centuries ending in the year 1936, the peoples of the Iberian Peninsula, with the exception of the Catalans and latterly also the Basques, had been living spiritually somewhat out of touch with the life of the modern Western World. In the same context, however,² it has been noticed, besides, that this vein of spiritual aloofness had not secured for Spain an immunity from the impact of extraneous forces. In both of the two General Wars of 1672–1713 and 1792–1815 Spain had been drawn into the struggle, and Spanish territories and waters had been the scene of battles in which Spaniards as well as foreigners had been engaged. Even in the General War of 1914–18, in which Spain had preserved her neutrality, the tide of warfare had washed menacingly round her frontier, and her social fabric had been shaken by the reverberations of the struggle on the other side of the Pyrenees. In the war which began in July 1936, history repeated itself with a difference. Once again, Spain was the theatre of a war in which both foreigners and Spaniards were fighting. The difference was that, instead of a general European war spreading into Spain, this time a local Spanish war threatened to extend out of Spain over Europe. This difference between the Spanish war which began in 1936 and those of 1704–13 and 1807–14 was perhaps greater in appearance than in reality; for while it was true that, down to the time of writing, the latest of these three wars, unlike its two predecessors, had been confined geographically within the frontiers of Spain, this too was essentially a European war, though it was being fought out, by tacit agreement between the principal European belligerents and neutrals, in a Peninsular arena. Nor could it even be said that these European combatants on Spanish soil had merely seized upon, and converted to their own sinister purposes, an affray that had started as a civil war between Spaniard and Spaniard. For it would have been difficult to point to an initial period, however brief, during which this war in Spain was a civil war pure and simple. The beginning of foreign intervention must be dated back at least as

¹ See pp. 1–3, above.

² See pp. 1–2, above.

early as the firing of the first shot by the Nationalists; and there were indications that foreign Powers had been making preparations for the contingency of a war in Spain for some time before the actual hostilities broke out—perhaps ever since the fall of the Dictatorship of the Marqués de Estella in 1930.¹ There was even some ground for belief that such foreign machinations had played an appreciable part in bringing the war about.

If we ask how it happened that a Spain that was so strongly inclined to hold aloof from the Western Civilization of the age² was nevertheless swept, once again, into the maelstrom of European politics, the answer is given by the map. It was one of the tragic ironies of the Spanish people's modern history that their apparently strong desire in these latter days to make their country into something like a hermit kingdom—at least in certain departments of its life—was condemned *a priori* to frustration by a geographical situation which was as unchangeable as the leopard's spots or the Ethiopian's skin.

The Spain of 1936 was, of course, no longer the Spanish Empire which, at its maximum in the sixteenth century, had stretched from Sicily to the Philippines and from Friesland to Chile. The revolt of the Northern Netherlands, the encroachments of Louis XIV, the

¹ After the war had begun there was an interchange of accusations to the effect that Russia on the one hand and Italy and Germany on the other had been actively engaged for months or even years past in fishing in the troubled waters of Spain; but these charges and counter-charges bore the unmistakable stamp of propaganda, and it was extremely difficult for a neutral observer to sift out the truth from the inventions, perversions and exaggerations in the evidence which was published in support of the allegations.

For the charge against Russia of preparing for a Communist Revolution (which would, it was alleged, have taken place about the end of July 1936 if it had not been forestalled by Nationalist action) see, for instance, Douglas Jerrold, *Georgian Adventure* (London, 1937, Collins). See also a note which was addressed by the Portuguese Government to the Non-Intervention Committee at the end of October 1936, in reply to Russian accusations of Portuguese intervention (text in the *Journal des Nations*, 6th November, 1936), which contained particulars regarding Russia's alleged intrigues in Spain; and an article from Barcelona published in *The Times* of the 5th January, 1937.

On the other side, a large mass of documents revealing the subversive activities of a Nazi organization in Spain was said to have been seized by the Spanish Government in Madrid and Barcelona after the outbreak of war, and translations of some of these documents were eventually published in England (see *The Nazi Conspiracy in Spain* by the Editor of *The Brown Book of the Nazi Terror*, translated from the German manuscript by Emile Burns (London, 1937, Gollancz)). The Madrid Government also claimed to have obtained possession of documents which convicted Italy of illegitimate activities in Spain which were of older standing than the Nazi activities (see *The Daily Herald*, 8th May, 1937; *The Manchester Guardian*, 3rd April, 1937).

² See p. 2, above.

transfer of Italy from a Spanish to an Austrian hegemony as a result of the War of the Spanish Succession, the secession of the continental American dominions of the Spanish Crown as a result of the Peninsular War, and finally the loss of Cuba and the Philippines in the Spanish-American War of 1898, had reduced the Spanish Empire in the course of four centuries to modest dimensions. In the year 1936 Spain's possessions, outside her continental metropolitan territory in the Iberian Peninsula itself, were confined to three sets of islands—one in the Mediterranean, another in the North Atlantic, and the third in the Gulf of Guinea—and four enclaves of continental territory in Africa. Spain's Mediterranean islands were the Balearics; her Atlantic islands were the Canaries; her tropical African island was Fernando Po; her continental African possessions were the tropical enclave of Spanish Guinea, opposite Fernando Po, the two barren enclaves of Rio de Oro and Ifni, opposite the Canaries, and another strip of African territory, facing Spain herself across the Straits of Gibraltar, which was more valuable both economically and strategically. This North African strip consisted of two parts which were historically and juridically distinct. On the one hand, there were the four so-called *presidios*¹—Ceuta, Peñon de Velez de la Gomera, Alhucemas Island and Melilla—which were old and integral parts of Spain, though they happened to lie on the African side of the narrow seas. On the other hand, there was the Spanish Zone of Morocco, which was not an ancient Spanish possession, but a Spanish protectorate of recent date. The distinction was important, because Spain's title to the occupation of this zone rested on a set of international treaties, to which France and Great Britain were parties, and which made Spain's title subject to certain conditions.² She had bound herself neither to fortify this zone nor to alienate it; and the conditional character of her tenure of it had also been demonstrated *de facto* after it had been laid down *de jure*; for the effective Spanish occupation of this Spanish Zone of Morocco had only been completed with the assistance of French arms—and this as recently as the year 1926, seventeen years after the beginning of the Spanish Army's unsuccessful efforts to master the zone unaided.³

It will be seen that, since the close of the sixteenth century, the Castilian Spanish Empire had shrunk in the same measure as its great contemporary, rival and counterpart the Ottoman Turkish Empire; but, by the same token, the remnant of it that survived in 1936 still occupied a geographical situation of 'world-historical' im-

¹ See the *Survey for 1925*, vol. i, p. 98.

² See *op. cit.*, pp. 98–101.

³ See *op. cit.*, Part II, sections (v)–(viii).

portance, to use the appropriate German phrase. The Spain and the Turkey of A.D. 1936 bore, in fact, as close a resemblance to one another as the Castilian and the Ottoman Empire of A.D. 1600. In geographical terms each of these states consisted, at the later of these two dates, of a peninsula with a sea-board on each of two different seas, coupled with a bridgehead on the opposite side of a narrow waterway which was the sole maritime means of communication between one of those two seas and the other. In the Anatolian Peninsula Turkey severed the Black Sea from the Mediterranean, while in Thrace she commanded the Bosphorus, the Sea of Marmora and the Dardanelles. In the Iberian Peninsula Spain severed the Mediterranean from the Atlantic, while in North Africa (i.e. in the *presidios* in combination with the Spanish Zone of Morocco) she commanded the Straits of Gibraltar. Another state with whose geographical position that of Spain was comparable was Denmark, with her two-fold sea-board on the Baltic and the North Sea, her half-share in the command of the Sound and the Skagerrack, and her outpost in the Faroe Islands—a Danish insular possession which was comparable, without being equal, in strategic importance to the Spanish outpost in the Canaries.

The international significance of even this much reduced Spanish Empire is manifest at a glance. In a world in which the forces of destruction were kept within bounds by the collective maintenance of a more or less effective system of international law and order, Spain, together with Turkey and Denmark, might enjoy the happiness of having no history. But in a world which was witnessing the at least temporary breakdown of that attempt at a collective organization of peace that had been made after the General War of 1914–18, the geographical situation of Spain could not fail to become a crucial factor in international affairs. For the failure—even if only for the time being—of an effort to organize a world-wide international society on a basis of justice, reason and consent re-opened the door for counter-attempts to unify the world politically by the old and evil method of the lawless abuse of superior force for the purpose of conquest and domination¹; and if the eclipse of the League of Nations was to be followed by an international struggle of all against all for the prize of 'world power' (to use a German expression again), then it was hardly conceivable that the potential strategic importance of Spain and her possessions should not become actual.

In such a struggle the neutrality of Spain would in any case have been in jeopardy—even if the Spaniards had not facilitated foreign

¹ See the *Survey for 1937*, vol. i, Part I, pp. 5 *seqq.*

intervention by falling out among themselves—because of Spain's geographical bearing upon vital strategic interests of all the four European Great Powers. The balance of power between Italy and Great Britain might be turned this way or that according to whether political control over the Spanish coasts of the Straits of Gibraltar was in hands friendly to Great Britain or at any rate neutral, or in hands friendly to Italy,¹ and in the same way the bias of the political control over the Balearic Islands might exercise a decisive influence upon the balance of power between Italy and France.² Moreover, the naval balance of power in the Mediterranean was not the only strategic question at stake; even greater issues were involved in the Spanish strategic factor in the North Atlantic.

In 1936 the Spanish Empire still debouched upon the western seaboard of the North Atlantic at four points: first, along the north and north-west coasts of the Iberian Peninsula itself, between the south-west corner of France and the north-west corner of Portugal; second, on both the European and the African flank of the Atlantic end of the Straits of Gibraltar, between the south-east corner of Portugal and the north-west corner of the French Zone of Morocco (save only for a neutral enclave cut out of the Spanish Zone of Morocco round Tangier); in the third place, in the region of the Canary Islands and the two adjoining enclaves of Spanish territory on the mainland of West Africa; in the fourth place, in the region of the Island of Fernando Po and the adjoining enclave of Spanish territory on the Guinea Coast. Of these four positions, the first was strategically the most important; for the north-west corner of Spain, Cape Finisterre, was flanked by several good harbours—Ferrol, Coruña, Vigo—and was skirted by three sea-routes of first-rate importance: the route between the Atlantic ports of France and the Atlantic ports of French Africa; the route between Great Britain and the coasts of South America from the mouth of the River Amazon to the mouth of the River Plate inclusive; and, last but not least, the 'short route', via the Atlantic (as well as the 'long route', via the Mediterranean), from Great Britain to South Africa, and the 'long route', round the Cape, (as well as the 'short route', via the Mediterranean), from Great Britain to British East Africa, India, Burma, Malaya, Australia, New Zealand, and the Far East.

It was evident that if Italy were to obtain even an indirect control over some or all of these four Spanish frontages on the Atlantic, her ability to 'make herself a nuisance' to France and Great Britain

¹ This point is discussed in detail on pp. 183-4, below.

² See pp. 184-5, below.

would be greatly increased ; but in this Atlantic aspect of the Spanish strategic factor in international affairs Italy's interests and opportunities were not so conspicuous as Germany's. If Germany were to succeed in obtaining naval facilities at some or all of these Spanish *points d'appui* on the western shores of the North Atlantic, she might be in a position, in case of a conflict with the West-European Powers, to intercept the communications between France and Great Britain on the one hand and the French and British overseas empires on the other hand,¹ and at the same time she would be securing Spanish stepping-stones for her own eventual re-entry into Africa ; while if she were to obtain a hold upon Spain as a whole she would gain the possibility of playing on France the trick of 'encirclement' which France might be held to have been playing on Germany ever since the conclusion of the Franco-Russian alliance of 1894.²

In 1936, indeed, Spain was once more the determining factor in a European balance of power. In the event of war between the 'democratic' and the 'Fascist' pair of European Great Powers, there would be little prospect of a decision on the continental front across which these opponents would be facing one another between the North Sea and the Atlantic. At a time when the technical advantage of the defensive over the offensive was considered by the experts to be in the order of about three to one, nothing but a military stalemate was to be expected either on the Alpine sector between France and Italy or on the Rhenish sector where the Maginot Line had presumably been matched, at the time of writing, by a German equivalent. A decision could therefore hardly be achieved unless one of the two parties could succeed in turning the other's flank ; and for this purpose a command of the Iberian Peninsula would be of capital importance. If the Western Powers commanded it they might hope to succeed in establishing contact, via the Mediterranean, with the Soviet Union and any other potential allies of theirs on the eastern flank of 'the Rome-Berlin Axis'. On the other hand, if the Central

¹ The terms of the Anglo-German naval agreement of the 18th June, 1935 (see the *Survey for 1935*, vol. i, pp. 178 *seqq.*), had, no doubt, been offered by the German Government and accepted by the British Government as a token that Herr Hitler's Third Reich did not intend to revert to the naval policy of the Emperor William II's Second Reich, which had challenged Great Britain to an unrestricted competition in naval armaments. The acquisition of naval facilities in Spanish ports might, however, enable Germany, without departing from the Anglo-German agreement of the 18th June, 1935, to incline in her own favour the resultant balance between German and British naval power—especially in view of the fact that the agreement entitled Germany to a parity with Great Britain in submarines.

² This possibility is examined on pp. 188 *seqq.*, below.

Powers commanded the Iberian Peninsula, they might not only liberate themselves from the nightmare of a war on two fronts, but might put their Western opponents in this unpleasant quandary.

Nor were Spain's strictly strategic assets the only Spanish factors that came into consideration in the sinister play of 'power politics' which had been let loose by the breakdown of the League of Nations. Spain's strategic importance was enhanced by her economic resources and by her cultural affinities.

While the economic importance of Spain and of her overseas possessions was not nearly so great as the strategic importance of the same territories in the year 1936, it was still great enough to count for something in the Spanish policy of foreign Powers.¹ Apart from olive oil and oranges, the commodities in which Spain's production supplied an appreciable part of the world's demand were raw minerals; and while the mineral resources of Spain were rich and diverse, there were only two minerals in which her output was a dominating factor in the world's economic life. Spain at this time provided the world with some 40 to 45 per cent. of its quicksilver and with more than 50 per cent. of its pyrites. But the importance of particular Spanish mineral supplies could not be gauged adequately in terms of a simple proportion sum. For example, the iron ore which had been shipped, since the eighth decade of the nineteenth century, from the Three Basque Provinces and Asturias had never amounted to more than a small fraction of the world output of iron ore, and since the 'peak' year 1913 the quantity exported had greatly decreased. Nevertheless, this North Spanish iron ore had a value which could not be measured in purely quantitative terms. For one thing, it was of a quality that made its use desirable, if not indispensable, for the production of the finer irons,² then, again, the location of the deposits, almost at the water's edge, made it possible to ship it cheaply, especially to Great Britain;³ and in the third place the breakdown, since 1929, of the old system of unrestricted

¹ See, on this subject, two illuminating articles in *The Financial News* of the 23rd September, 1936, and the 8th July, 1937.

² Ores of the same quality as those of Northern Spain had latterly been discovered and mined in the Spanish Zone of Morocco and in Algeria (see the *Survey for 1937*, vol. i, Part V, section (i)). Already before the war of 1914-18, the Germans had been interested commercially in the Spanish Moroccan ore, and they busied themselves with it again after the outbreak of the Spanish War in the summer of 1936. (See pp. 281-2, below.)

³ For the diversion of Basque and Asturian exports of iron ore from Great Britain to Germany as a result of the conquest of the three Basque Provinces and Asturias by the Spanish Nationalists and their foreign allies see pp. 174-5, below.

multilateral international trade made supplies of commodities in one country important for potential consumers in other countries which were able to make favourable bilateral arrangements for reserving for their own exclusive use even supplies which amounted to no more than a small fraction of the total world supply. These considerations, of course, had special weight for countries which had consciously given up the attempt to remain participants in a world economy and had thrown themselves whole-heartedly into the contrary system of exchange-control, clearing agreements and quotas. Since Italy, Germany and Russia had all taken this road, the possibility of earmarking some of the mineral resources of Spain for their own private national use, by way of payment in kind for military and political services, was a consideration that played its part, side by side with strategic and 'ideological' calculations, in the Spanish policy of each of these three Powers.

This rather summary survey of the situation of Spain cannot be closed without a glance at the cultural factor; for, on this cultural plane, what happened in Castile was likely to have repercussions in the former Spanish Empire's Latin-American successor states, while what happened in Catalonia would not be without effect either in France or in Italy. Currents of feeling circulated between Madrid and Mexico City, between Santiago de Compostella and Santiago de Chile, between Barcelona and Marseilles and Genoa. In the war which began in 1936, there were signs that, in despite of an unabated Spanish antipathy towards the modern phase of the Western form of civilization,¹ the spiritual insulation of Spain was being broken down—partly because the modern Western World was now forcing itself upon Spain with an overwhelming violence, and partly because, as this resort to violence betrayed, the West itself at this time was reverting to the seventeenth-century spirit of which Spain had never divested herself. In the words of a letter from a distinguished Spanish philosopher-statesman, Don Salvador de Madariaga, which was published in *The Times* newspaper of London on the 19th July, 1937, and was quoted on the same day in the House of Commons at Westminster by the United Kingdom Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Eden,

By a tragic coincidence this war, essentially Spanish, has 'caught on' abroad. Lured by somewhat shallow parallelisms, men, institutions and even Governments outside Spain have been adding fuel to the fire which is consuming our unhappy country. Spain is thus suffering vicariously the latent civil war which Europe is—so far—keeping in check.

¹ See pp. 1-3, above.

A Transpyrenean Liberal who at this moment found himself confronted with the prospect of a perhaps total loss of all the laboriously acquired gains of rationalism and humanitarianism since the close of the Wars of Religion might have retorted with some sense of bitterness that the infection of a never-slaked Castilian fever seemed now to be raising to a further, and this time perhaps a deadly, degree an emotional temperature which, in the enlightened heart of the Western World, had already been rising dangerously, for the past century and a half, from the safely low point at which it had stood in the age of Leibnitz and Voltaire and Gibbon. At this critical moment the authentic accents of the Eighteenth Century could still be heard in the mouth of the French Foreign Minister. In a speech delivered at Sarlat on the 3rd August, 1936,¹ Monsieur Delbos declared, in the name of his countrymen, that

as we do not want to risk war on any pretext, we do not want to meddle in the internal affairs of any country that you may care to name. At no price must there be a new crusade of ideals in Europe, for such a crusade would inevitably have war for its outcome.

This despairing cry of a *Weltanschauung* which, to all appearance, was now *in extremis*, received its answer on the 8th January, 1937, in an article, published in the *Osservatore Romano* of that date, in which the accents of a pre-Voltairean Western Christendom made themselves heard once more:

There are several classes of intellectuals and even of statesmen who deplore the so-called war of doctrines or ideological war which, according to them, is leading Europe into a war which will be fought out not with theories but with iron. It is as well, however, to begin by clearing up a confusion of thought which lies at the root of their anxiety, namely that this war of doctrines is something peculiar to our own times, a special disease of our present civilization. In reality it is not a disease at all, not even a modern disease. It is history, it is the life of man. . . . To a militant conception of life a struggle for a doctrine is a holy war, something which, for spiritual reasons, is inevitable. Only Liberal agnosticism with its conception of tolerance in theory as well as in practice (which means the identification of truth and error and therefore scepticism), can be shocked by ideological struggles.

At this point a second confusion of thought may be denounced: that is to say the materialist conception of history, according to which, war is the affirmation of more or less selfish and material interests. . . . This materialism which calls itself historical is actually the most anti-historical of all philosophical theories of history. One may indeed say that all wars are really wars of doctrines; the conflict of ideas and the conflict of interests cannot be separated from a conflict of different con-

¹ This passage of Monsieur Delbos's speech of that date has already been quoted in the *Survey for 1935*, vol. ii, p. 449 n.

ceptions of life . . . Remember the crusades, the Christian wars against Islam, the wars of religion, French Encyclopaedism following Napoleon's armies, the Holy Alliance, even the war waged by constitutional Liberalism through half last century, the last world war for liberty and democracy, the war destined, according to Wilson, 'to make the world safe for Democracy'.

In A.D. 1937 it looked as though, throughout the Western World, the positive attitude that was struck in this article emanating from the Vatican City was likely to prevail over the negative attitude of the French Foreign Minister of the day; and such an event would realize Louis XIV's dream of 'abolishing the Pyrenees', albeit not in the French autocrat's way. Instead of Spain's remerging herself in the general life of the Western World by surrendering at last to the comfort of a sceptical enlightenment, it now seemed not impossible that the Transpyrenean peoples might revert to the temper of Spain by recapturing that will to pursue ideals at the price of comfort which had been condemned as 'fanaticism', and eschewed as a bad bargain, by the great-grandfathers of the living generation of Englishmen and Frenchmen.

(b) THE INTERPLAY OF NATIONALISM AND IDEOLOGY

The vehemence of the passions which the war in Spain excited in the Transpyrenean countries was perhaps more remarkable in France and Great Britain than elsewhere, because these two countries had been, for the past two and a half centuries, the very hearth and home of the prosaic, anti-Quixotic philosophy of life that was the 'pre-totalitarian' form of a modern Western paganism. It was the creed of this Liberal philosophy that Folly became indistinguishable from Crime when she took up arms in vindication of interests that were not utilitarian; and therefore the spectacle of a France and an England convulsed by ideological passions looked like a portent of the end of an epoch. In the same year, 1936, the same passions were also aflame in the three great 'totalitarian' countries of Central and Eastern Europe; but the situation in Italy, Germany and the Soviet Union differed from that in Great Britain and France in one respect that was fraught with important practical consequences.

In each of the 'totalitarian' countries there was a twofold resolution of forces which, on a short view, endowed all these countries with a formidable *Aktionsfähigkeit* in a struggle for 'world power', though on a longer reckoning this immediate politico-military advantage might have to be paid for at the price of spiritual impoverishment and even bankruptcy. In the first place the 'totalitarian'

régimes were, by definition, intolerant, as far as their effective authority extended, of any 'ideologies' that conflicted with their own, and in all these countries alike the expression in speech or writing, and *a fortiori* the translation into action, of any creed contrary to that of the party in power had been suppressed by brute force. In each of these countries one voice only was now heard because all other voices had been either muffled in the concentration camp or smothered in the grave. There was no confusion of counsels, because there was no debate; and this first short-term advantage was reinforced by a second. In each of these three countries the unchallenged will of the ruling phalanx was in harmony with *raison d'état* as this would have been conceived by an eighteenth-century adept in the art of statesmanship. An Italian Fascist and a German National Socialist and a Russian Communist could enjoy the exhilaration of feeling that in serving his party he was serving his country too, while conversely a patriotic German or Italian or Russian who was indifferent, or even hostile, to the reigning régime and to its intolerant 'ideology' could still enjoy the consolation of feeling that a régime for which he could have no enthusiasm in any other regard was at any rate working in the common national cause as energetically and as successfully as the patriotic critic himself could desire.

These two points of immediate strength in the Soviet Union, Germany and Italy were unequally matched in France and Great Britain by two corresponding points of immediate weakness. In the first place, conflicting 'ideologies' were allowed, *ex hypothesi*, in countries which prided themselves on being democratic and which jealously treasured their traditional domestic liberties, to contend with one another without fear or favour, even to the point of confusing counsels and impeding action. The French and British Governments of the day could not silence the Opposition without being guilty of a revolutionary abuse of their constitutional powers. For such an imitation of 'totalitarian' politics the parliamentarian-minded French and British politicians then in office had no stomach. In so far as they were faced with a choice between unlawfully muzzling the Opposition and inexpeditely allowing themselves to be handicapped by it, they unhesitatingly and steadily preferred the latter of these two evils. The Opposition's sacrosanct power to obstruct the policy of the Government in office did not, however, at this time carry with it the logically complementary power to turn the Government out and take office themselves for the purpose of attempting some different policy of their own. The consequence of this mutual frustration of Opposition and Government was a feebleness, which in crises

often verged upon paralysis, in the conduct of French and British foreign policy. And this weakness was aggravated by the further misfortune that the policy which was demanded of the French and British Governments at this time by considerations of *raison d'état* was on the whole perhaps more in consonance with the 'ideology' of a party which, in the sphere of foreign affairs, was virtually, even if not technically, in opposition than with that of the party in accordance with whose views and wishes the Government's policy was being shaped.¹ Thus in the 'democratic' countries there was a double conflict—on the one hand between the respective 'ideologies' of the Opposition and the Government, and on the other hand between that 'ideology' with which the Government—or the governing elements in the body politic—were in sympathy and the dictates of *raison d'état* as these might have presented themselves if the interest of the country had been disengaged from all 'ideological' considerations and had been pursued with a 'totalitarian' single-mindedness.

This twofold political paralysis co-operated with a moral aversion from, and a material unreadiness for, war to render the two West European 'democratic' Powers at least temporarily incompetent, by comparison with their 'totalitarian' neighbours, for taking effective action in a forum that was now threatening to degenerate into an arena. It was true that the 'totalitarian' Governments were hardly less anxious (as far as could be judged) than the 'democratic' Governments were to avoid 'major' wars with Powers of their own calibre. They were, however, prepared—to an extent that was revealed by the lengths to which they went in Spain in violating the Non-Intervention Agreement—to incur greater risks of war for the sake of pursuing their national ambitions than the 'democratic' Governments were ready to incur for the sake of defending their national interests. In situations in which an eighteenth-century, or even a nineteenth-century, French or British Government might have preferred to accept a risk of war to-day rather than postpone that risk to a morrow on which it might have to be accepted, after all, under more adverse conditions, the 'democratic' French and British Governments of the years 1936–7 showed themselves determined to abstain from any

¹ This was manifest in Great Britain under the so-called 'National Government'; but the situation was fundamentally the same in France under the administration of Governments representing the so-called 'Front Populaire'; for in their foreign policy MM. Blum and Chautemps, no less than Messrs. Baldwin and Chamberlain, were to a large extent carrying out the ideas and desires of the Right, while conversely the French Socialists and Communists were as strongly opposed to this foreign policy that was professedly being carried out in their name as the British Labour Party were to the foreign policy that was admittedly being carried out in their despite.

action that might involve a risk of war forthwith, and this even in cases where it was probable that such abstention would give away formidable potential advantages to Powers who would almost certainly be in the opposite camp if another general war did break out later notwithstanding all the efforts of French and British diplomacy. They were not only unwilling to use war themselves as an instrument of national policy; they were unwilling even to exercise their legitimate rights in the sphere of non-military action if there was a risk that the exercise of them might move other Powers to take illegitimate military reprisals. In thus doing their best to make sure of peace to-day, the two Governments were, to all appearances, carrying out the wishes of a majority of the people in either country, however loudly the opposing voices might protest. And when this hazarding of long-term national interests, including perhaps the ultimate preservation of peace itself, worked out in harmony with the 'ideological' proclivities of some at least of the politicians who had to take the decisions, the choice for the Governments in London and Paris was as heavily weighted in favour of inaction as the choice for the Governments in Berlin, Rome and Moscow was weighted in favour of action *sub rosa*. The three 'totalitarian' Powers were, indeed, assiduous in breaking their non-intervention engagements to the two 'democratic' Powers up to the extreme limit of French and British forebearance; and the unwillingness of the two Western Powers to follow suit in this deplorable game put them at a further disadvantage which did them no dishonour. The whole policy of non-intervention, as proposed by the 'democratic' Powers and nominally accepted by the 'totalitarian' Powers, presupposed the maintenance of a certain traditional standard of honesty in diplomatic dealings; and the 'democratic' Powers made no unreasonable demand in expecting of their neighbours a modicum of straightforwardness, short of which it was difficult to see how any kind of international intercourse could continue.

After this general preface it may be convenient to discuss separately the interests and motives, in the Spanish affair, of each of these five European Powers and also those of certain other parties who were likewise closely concerned.

(c) THE INTERESTS AND MOTIVES OF THE FRENCH

Of all the five European Powers, France was the most closely and immediately affected by the outbreak of war in Spain on the 17th July, 1936; for France, alone of the five, had a common land-frontier with the country that was the theatre of the hostilities. The proximity of France to the Spanish conflagration was brought home to

French minds by the fact that one of the first of the military operations upon which the Spanish Nationalists embarked was a successful move to intercept the communications overland between France and those Basque and Asturian territories in North-Western Spain that were on the side of the Government at Madrid.¹ These operations brought the war in Spain literally within sight of French eyes, and in these circumstances it was not unnatural that the French Government should be the first of the five to take action with a view to preventing the war from spreading.

In this international crisis Monsieur Blum and his colleagues in a recently inaugurated coalition Government² of Socialists and Socialist-Radicals found themselves in a peculiarly difficult position. It was beyond question that, according to the currently accepted rules of international law, French citizens, and the French Government themselves if they so desired, were fully entitled to supply war materials to the Government at Madrid, who, in the eyes of the law, were a legitimate Government contending with an unlawful rebellion. French citizens could not be restrained from exercising their right to sell arms to the Spanish Government without denying to that Government their own equally clear right to purchase arms abroad, and the sale of French arms to the Spanish Government could not fail to be desired by large numbers of Frenchmen of all classes and parties. Frenchmen of the Left would desire to see sales of arms, from which they themselves might reap no financial profit, made by French manufacturers to a Spanish Government of the Left, now fighting for their existence, with whom the French Left were 'ideologically' in sympathy, while French manufacturers, for their part, might be tempted by the prospective profits to engage in a commercial transaction that, for many of them, might be 'ideologically' unpalatable. Moreover, in the parliamentary bloc on whose support Monsieur Blum's Government were directly dependent for their existence, there was, no doubt, a considerable majority in favour of helping the Spanish Government, at any rate by all lawful means; for this bloc included all the deputies and senators belonging to the three parties—Socialist-Radicals, Socialists and Communists—composing the Popular Front. In the Cabinet, however, the Communists (by their own choice) were not represented; their absence gave the Socialist-Radicals a greater relative weight in the Cabinet than in the Chamber; and the

¹ See pp. 54–5, above.

² The parliamentary general election in France which had carried the Popular Front to victory had been held on the 26th April and the 3rd May; Monsieur Blum's Government had taken office on the 4th June.

Socialist-Radical Ministers' influence on the Government's policy told on the whole¹ in favour of overruling the French desire to exercise the French right of selling arms to the Spanish Government, in order to make sure of fulfilling another French desire which the exercise of this French right might threaten to frustrate. This other desire was a wish to keep France herself out of war here and now, and, in the pursuit of an aim which was common to almost all Frenchmen at the time, the Socialist-Radical Ministers were perhaps not so much distracted as their Socialist colleagues may have been by an 'ideological' sympathy with the Popular Front in Spain. The Socialists' 'ideological' partisanship was, however, cancelled out, to some extent, by their doctrinaire pacifism;² and Ministers of both parties had equally to reckon with an Opposition of the Right whose attitude towards popular fronts, in Spain and France alike, was not simply detached or unsympathetic but was positively hostile. This French Opposition was already showing alarm and anger over the effervescence and unrest that had come to the surface among the industrial working class in France upon the Popular Front's advent to power. The Government had their hands full with their dual task of inducing strikers to return to work and inducing employers to acquiesce in legislation which would, it was hoped, bring the unrest among the workers to an end by providing for immediate and considerable improvements in their conditions of work and life and remuneration. For a French Government who were struggling to tide over a long overdue and, in consequence, now semi-revolutionary social change, the avoidance of war in the immediate future was all-important. While an outbreak of war, involving France, would almost certainly frustrate and undo social reforms which the French Socialists, especially, had at heart, the mere possibility of charging the Government with having followed a foreign policy—no matter how legitimate in itself—from which war might result would also give the Opposition a new and powerful lever for engineering the overthrow of a Government whose fall it desired on more controversial domestic grounds.

¹ There was at least one Socialist-Radical member of Monsieur Blum's Cabinet, the Air Minister, Monsieur Pierre Cot, who was credited with a desire to see the French Government intervene in Spain on the Madrid Government's behalf.

² The left wing of the French Socialist Party, and in particular the Fédération de la Seine, under the leadership of Monsieur Pivert, was at this time distracted between an extreme pacifism and a proclivity towards Trotskyism. Monsieur Pivert was conducting simultaneously a campaign for the complete disarmament of France and a campaign for the active support of the Spanish Popular Front by France.

Some such manœuvre may have been at least partly responsible for reports—which began to appear in the French Press of the Right within a few days of the outbreak of fighting in Spain—that the French Government had in fact been supplying the Spanish Government with arms. Whether these reports were published maliciously or in good faith, their effect upon the Government's action is unquestionable. On the 25th July, 1936, the Cabinet held an emergency meeting, and after a debate in which the Air Minister, Monsieur Pierre Cot, was reported to have been at issue with the Foreign Minister, Monsieur Delbos, and the Defence Minister, Monsieur Daladier, the decision to forego French legal rights by adopting a policy of non-intervention was taken by the Prime Minister, Monsieur Blum,¹ and the Cabinet as a whole. It was decided that no French war materials were to be exported to Spain either by the French Government themselves or by private French citizens. The international sequel to this decision taken in Paris is recorded in later chapters of this part.² In this place we are concerned with the sequel in France.

Having done their best to disarm the Opposition, the Government addressed themselves to the no less arduous task of pacifying their own followers. On the 30th July, the non-intervention policy was commended by MM. Blum and Delbos to the Foreign Affairs Commissions of the Senate and the Chamber, and to the Chamber as a whole by Monsieur Delbos on the next night. In a *communiqué* of the 3rd August, announcing the appeal which, in the meantime, France had made to other Powers to adopt a common policy of non-intervention in concert with her,³ it was again mentioned that she was provisionally practising non-intervention unilaterally. Meanwhile, the chagrin which the French Government's non-intervention policy had inflicted on the feelings of their own supporters was rapidly being transformed into indignation by credible reports that the two 'Fascist' Powers were intervening in Spain actively. Monsieur Delbos's anti-crusading speech at Sarlat on the 3rd August⁴ was bound to incense the militant Left in the measure in which it was calculated to reassure a more prosaic-minded bourgeoisie. The opposing thesis was put forward in strong terms on the 5th August

¹ One consideration that may have weighed with Monsieur Blum was the hope, with which he had recently taken office, that a Government of the Left in France might be able to achieve that reconciliation with Germany which previous Governments of the Right had been unable or unwilling to bring about.

² See pp. 233 *seqq.*, below.

³ See p. 233, below.

⁴ A passage from the speech has been cited on p. 134, above.

in a speech delivered at Lille by Monsieur Jouhaux, the Secretary-General of the Confédération Générale du Travail:

In the face of the Spanish situation there can be no neutrality for the conscientious worker. The old dogma of non-intervention has cost us dear, and now threatens to cost us even more. The defeat of the Spanish workers may well prove our defeat, not only from the social point of view, but even the defeat of our own country.

The speaker then developed the point that the war against the Spanish Government was a move in a politico-strategic plan for the encirclement of France that was being executed, step by step, by the two partners in 'the Rome-Berlin Axis'; and his conclusion was uncompromising:

We want peace. But there will only be true peace when those who wish for war are utterly powerless. The day dictatorship is vanquished, on that day social justice will come into its own and peace reign over the world.

On the 8th August a speech of similar tenor, but in still stronger terms, and presenting a definite demand that the Spanish Government should be supplied from France with arms, munitions and aeroplanes, was made by the Secretary-General of the French Communist Party, Monsieur Thorez.¹ On the 9th August, at a peace demonstration at Saint-Cloud, Monsieur Blum failed to stem the rising tide of feeling on the Left by an appeal in general terms in favour of peace. In the Chamber on the 13th August an uproar was excited by a renewal, from the Right, of the accusation that the Madrid Government had been receiving deliveries of French aeroplanes. The Administrative Committee of the Confédération Générale du Travail met on the 21st August and issued next day a declaration reaffirming its 'complete solidarity with the people and proletariat of Spain' and re-enunciating the duty of the workers belonging to the C.G.T. to help their Spanish comrades by every possible means. On the 21st there was also a meeting in Paris of leading representatives—French, Belgian and British—of the Second (Socialist) International and the allied international federation of trades union movements. One of the French participants was Monsieur Jouhaux, who, like his Belgian colleague Monsieur de Brouckère, had just returned from a visit to Madrid. At Lille on the 24th August Monsieur Jouhaux addressed a meeting of 150,000 French Syndicalists in which he described the war in Spain as 'the struggle of the light against the night'. On the

¹ The Spanish policy of the French Communists was free from the self-contradictoriness of that of the French Socialists, for one of the capital points on which the Communists differed from the Socialists was that the Communists were not pacifists.

25th August, at a mass meeting of supporters of the Popular Front in Paris, Monsieur Thorez announced the agreement of the French Communist Party with the stand taken by the Administrative Committee of the C.G.T. and by the Labour Party in England. At this stage Monsieur Blum again stepped in, and this time with greater effect.

On the 6th September the Prime Minister, at his own request, was given a hearing at a demonstration organized by the Fédération Socialiste de la Seine; and, after his appearance had been greeted with shouts of 'Des avions pour l'Espagne', he courageously grappled with the formidable question of the difference between his own policy and the feelings of his party. He told his audience that he had not changed; that his own feelings in regard to Spain were still just the same as theirs; that he was well aware that the maintenance of the legal Government of the Spanish Republic would guarantee to France, in the event of European complications, the security of her Pyrenean frontier and of her communications with North Africa, whereas the 'commitments and ambitions' of the Spanish Nationalists were obscure. He added that there was no doubt about the juridical position: the Madrid Government were the lawful Government of Spain, and, as such, they had, and the Nationalists had not, the right to obtain arms from abroad. He then confronted his audience with the hard fact that, if the lawful Spanish Government were legitimately supplied with arms from some countries, there would be a countervailing illegitimate supply of arms from other countries to the Spanish rebels.

I know quite well what each one of you is wishing for from the bottom of his heart. I know it very well. I understand it very well. You would like a situation to be reached in which deliveries of arms might be made to the advantage of the regular Government and might not be made to the advantage of the rebel forces. Of course you want that. In other countries, people want exactly the opposite.

Monsieur Blum then went on to forecast the consequences of an unrestricted foreign competition in supplying arms to the two combatant parties in Spain for the peace of Europe as a whole; and he put it to his audience that the conclusion of an international non-intervention agreement was the only way of salvation. In his peroration he declared with vehemence that he personally would never consent to be a party to any kind of preventive action that could only be justified by a belief in the ultimate inevitability of war.

I refuse [he declared] to regard war as possible to-day on the ground that it might be necessary or inevitable to-morrow.

This frank, courageous and moving speech took the hearts and minds of the Left by storm for the moment. Thereafter, Monsieur Blum's valiant efforts in France to reconcile his own party to his foreign policy were defeated by the march of events in Spain—and above all by the flagrant violation of the Non-Intervention Agreement: a piece of sharp-practice which infuriated the Left in both France and Great Britain when it was being perpetrated in the Spanish Nationalists' favour by Italy and Germany, without much regard to the fact that morally the surreptitious intervention of Italy and Germany on the side of the Spanish Nationalists was matched by a similarly surreptitious intervention on the part of the Soviet Union on the side of the Spanish Government.¹ On the 7th September some 200,000 metal workers in the Paris region—i.e. more than eighty percent of the total regional labour force in the metallurgical industry—went out on a one hour's strike in protest against non-intervention, which they denounced as a 'blockade' of the pro-Governmental part of Spain, and in other parts of France there were simultaneous strikes in other trades with the same motive. At a private meeting on the same day between Monsieur Blum and Monsieur Thorez, the leader of the French Communist Party did not yield to the Socialist Prime Minister's efforts to win him over to the French Government's non-intervention policy; and he continued his attack on the Government in an article published in *L'Humanité* on the 8th.

The Communists, and *a fortiori* the Socialists, were, however, in a dilemma; for they could not carry their opposition to the Government's Spanish policy *à outrance* without bringing the Government to the ground and thereby running the risk of bringing the régime of the Popular Front to a premature end. On the 8th September the Administrative Committee of the C.G.T. passed a would-be 'face-saving' resolution on the Spanish question in terms which did not conceal either their submission or their embarrassment; and on the 9th Monsieur Thorez came into line by announcing that, while the Communists' view remained unchanged, they would not vote against the Government in the Chamber. The French Communist Party did not even then quite abandon the struggle. At the end of October, and again on two occasions in November 1936, they appealed to the French Socialist Party to co-operate with them in putting joint pressure on

¹ The moral parity of Russian and Italo-German action in Spain, after the adhesion of all the three Powers to the Non-Intervention Agreement, was less open to dispute than the obscure question of the absolute and relative amount of the material aid that was given by the Soviet Union on the one hand and by the 'Axis' Powers on the other to their respective Spanish *protégés* at different stages of the war.

Monsieur Blum to change his Spanish policy, but these appeals appear to have had no effect; and on the 26th November, in the Foreign Affairs Commission of the Chamber, a Communist motion calling upon the Government to abandon non-intervention failed to obtain Socialist support, and was therefore defeated by 29 votes to 5. Though the Communist protest against non-intervention was echoed on the left wing of the Socialist Party by Monsieur Zyromski, a motion to abandon non-intervention, which was moved by him at a session of the National Council of the Socialist Party in February 1937, was heavily defeated,¹ and on the 14th of that month a contrary motion, approving the Government's policy, was carried in the Council by a block vote of 4,661 to 732. This acquiescence of the Left in the Government's policy did not mean that they were inwardly reconciled to it. On the 31st July, 1937, for example, the Socialist-Radical Foreign Minister, Monsieur Delbos, was howled down with shouts of 'Guns and acroplanes for Spain!' when he tried to address a meeting in memory of Jaurès. Yet on the 12th July, 1937, at a session of the French Socialist Party Congress at Marseilles, Monsieur Blum again defended his policy in terms that were quite as uncompromising as, and distinctly more provocative than, those that he had used in Paris on the 6th September, 1936.

I accept full responsibility for what we have done in this matter [he now declared in retrospect], though I agree that many of our hopes have been deceived. Thanks to the lie of non-intervention, peace has been preserved.

In his speech of the 6th September, 1936, Monsieur Blum had shown that, from the beginning of the war in Spain, he was as fully alive as were his critics in the ranks of his own party to the magnitude of the strategic stake of France in the outcome of this Spanish conflict. In the light of the sequel it may be questioned whether his, or any other, administration in Paris would have taken the initiative in promoting a policy of non-intervention if they could have foreseen either the extent to which the Non-Intervention Agreement was going to be violated on both sides or the degree to which this bilateral violation was going, on the balance, to work out to the advantage of the Powers who were intervening on behalf of the Spanish Nationalists. As the Italo-German intervention on the Nationalists' behalf grew to dimensions which threatened not only to ensure the Spanish

¹ In following the Communists' lead on the capital question of militancy, Monsieur Zyromski was, of course, flying in the face of his own associates on the left wing of the Socialist Party, who were strongly pacifist (see p. 140, footnote, above).

Government's defeat but to leave Italy and Germany, rather than the Spanish Nationalist Generals, as the effective victors on the Spanish battle-field, there were symptoms of a growing restiveness, on the part of the French Government themselves, against the bleak prospect of pursuing to the bitter end a French policy which was being made, by sharp-practice on the part of other Powers, to produce the exact opposite of its proper effects, to the serious prejudice of important French interests. There was one occasion on which the French Government did take the risk of insisting upon the cessation of an alleged infraction of the Non-Intervention Agreement by one of the 'Axis' Powers, and that was in January 1937, when a French protest against reported German military activities in the Spanish *presidios* and the Spanish Zone of Morocco was supported by a naval and military demonstration. As recorded below,¹ this firmness on the French Government's part produced its intended effect, but this was an exception which proved the rule of French acquiescence in Italo-German breaches of the agreement. As the Italo-German intervention in Spain came nearer and nearer towards achieving its object, the French General Staff were reported to be becoming more and more anxious,² and French statesmen uttered occasional warnings. For instance, on the 9th September, 1937, at a meeting of the Executive Committee of the French Socialist-Radical Party, the Minister for War, Monsieur Daladier, declared that

However great may be our real desire to remain faithful to the policy of non-intervention, we cannot allow this policy to become a death-trap—that is, to lead to the destruction of our communications with North Africa or to create a menace on our Pyrenaean frontier. In the life of a nation resolved to maintain its own greatness there are certain moments when it is obliged to say 'No'.

A similar warning was given by the French Foreign Minister, Monsieur Delbos, in the Assembly of the League of Nations at Geneva on the 18th September, 1937,³ and again at a meeting of the French Socialist-Radical Party Congress at Lille on the 29th October, 1937:

We are now [he declared on this occasion] in the decisive phase. It is evident that the present negotiations cannot continue indefinitely. We demand effective respect for the territorial integrity and political

¹ See pp. 282-3, below.

² For their reported anxiety in the summer of 1937 see pp. 327-8, below.

³ See pp. 356-7, below. Monsieur Delbos's stand on the 18th September, 1937, was taken seriously enough in Rome to cause instructions to be sent to the permanent representative of Italy at Geneva, Signor Bova-Scoppa, to give explicit and sweeping assurances to Monsieur Delbos on the 22nd September (see p. 358, below). These assurances were repeated in an Italian note of the 10th October, 1937 (see p. 365, below).

independence of Spain. We insist sharply on the withdrawal of the volunteers fighting in Spain, combined with the guarantee that further volunteers shall not be sent there

These warnings were not, however, followed up by effective action when it came to the point

The French Government's continued adherence to their non-intervention policy, in spite of their own growing misgivings, was perhaps partly due to the pressure of two external forces which reinforced the French Government's own spontaneous reluctance to risk any immediate breach of the general peace. There was a pressure from the British Government and there was a pressure from the French Right.

The British Government were sometimes accused by the Opposition of having forced the policy of non-intervention upon an unwilling French Government in the first instance. This was denied by the British Government; and Monsieur Blum concurred with Mr Eden¹ in stating publicly and repeatedly that the initiative in practising non-intervention themselves, and in calling upon other Governments to join France in adopting this policy, had been genuinely the French Government's own.² On the other hand, a knowledge of the British Government's attitude, and a wish to fall in with it, may have been one of the considerations in Monsieur Blum's mind at the time when he was arriving at his decision; and certainly the French policy had no sooner been accepted—with lip-service, though not, in all cases, at heart—by the other Powers, than the British Government took the lead in the endeavour to secure its execution—and this *vis-à-vis* France, as well as *vis-à-vis* the three 'totalitarian' Powers. By the time when the French Government were becoming restive at the results of a Non-Intervention Agreement that was being systematically violated by other parties, non-intervention had become a specifically British rather than a specifically French policy; and in October 1937 the French Government were reported to have been

¹ 'It is suggested', said Mr. Eden in the House of Commons at Westminster on the 29th October, 1936, 'that the French Government took their initiative under strong British pressure. Some even go so far as to say that we threatened the French Government with all sorts of pains and penalties if they did not do this thing. Of course there is not a word of truth in that story. It is pure fabrication. The French Government took this initiative on their own account....'

See also Mr. Eden's answer to a question asked by Mr. Lloyd George in the House of Commons at Westminster on the 27th July, 1936, and his speeches at Leamington on the 20th November and at Bradford on the 14th December, 1936.

² The facts, which do not seem really to be open to doubt, are set out on pp. 232 *seqq.*, below.

restrained from reopening their frontier for the export of French war-materials to Spain by British representations¹ on the lines of Monsieur Blum's representations, twelve months back, to the French Left

The motive of the British Government (which is examined further below)² in thus 'putting a brake' upon the restiveness of the French Government during the later months of 1937 is less obscure than the motive of the French Right. From the conclusion of the Armistice of the 11th November, 1918, down to the victory of the Popular Front in the French parliamentary general election of the 26th April and 3rd May, 1936, the French Right, more conspicuously than any other section of the French public, had been obsessed by one overwhelming political preoccupation from which no Frenchman was entirely free. During those seventeen and a half years the French people as a whole had been haunted by the fear of a resurgence of Germany, and they had exerted themselves to prevent, or at least to delay, this dreaded event, at a sacrifice of almost every other political consideration. Yet during the Spanish war which broke out in 1936, when the French nightmare had come true—and this in a more formidable shape than Clemenceau or Poincaré had ever augured—the French Right, who had hitherto led the van of their countrymen in the French war-after-the-war against Germany, seemed suddenly to have stood at ease on France's German front at the very moment when even the most phlegmatic British observer might have been inclined to feel that the time had come for once more standing at the ready. In 1935-6 the French Right had declined to act against Italy in the cause of collective security for fear that, if France were to indulge in the luxury of showing international public spirit, she might give Germany an opportunity to strike; and Monsieur Flandin and his friends acclaimed their own foresight when, in spite of France's success in keeping down the collective action against Italy to a minimum, Herr Hitler did, after all, reoccupy the Rhineland. Yet the very French Conservatives who in March 1936 had shown such deep concern when a screen of German troops had crossed the Rhine and had advanced, without ever trespassing beyond the limits of German territory, towards a French frontier that was covered by the Maginot Line, now showed no similar signs of apprehension when, only six months later, German airmen and technicians made their appearance in the rear of France in the Iberian Peninsula, while Italian airmen and warships established themselves in the Balearic Islands astride the maritime line of communications between the Mediterranean ports of France and French North Africa.

¹ See pp. 364-6, below.

² See pp. 151 *seqq.*, below.

This sudden change of attitude on the part of the French Right was remarkable, considering that, on an objective view, the German peril to France was more serious in September 1936, and far more serious in September 1937, than it had been in the March of the former of these two years. While the Germans were presumably now constructing, on the Rhenish front, over against the Maginot Line, fortifications of their own which would make it difficult for France to intervene on behalf of her Central and East European allies on the farther side of 'the Berlin-Rome Axis' in the event of a war between any of those countries and Germany, the Germans were now simultaneously establishing a military footing for themselves on the Spanish side of the Pyrenees, and were thereby threatening to envelop France in the toils of an 'encirclement' from which Germany herself was perhaps now escaping.¹ If these German manœuvres succeeded, France might find herself hemmed in as she had found herself at the beginning of the modern age of Western history, when a sovereignty over Spain and the Spanish Empire overseas had been combined in Hapsburg hands with a hegemony over Italy and with a presidency over the Holy Roman Empire which was conferred by a sovereignty over Austria.

This threat of a converging pressure from Central Europe and from the Iberian Peninsula might well cause apprehension in France in the light of an historic passage of modern French history. In the early years of the nineteenth century, when France under the leadership of Napoleon I had come within an ace of establishing her military and political ascendancy over the whole of Continental Europe, she had been overthrown after all through being compelled to wage war on two fronts on a Central European front against a coalition of Central and East European Powers, and on a Peninsular front against a native insurrectionary movement fomented and assisted by foreign military intervention from overseas. This French experience in the last phase of the General War of 1792-1815 had left a memory in French minds which came to the surface more than half a century later in the prelude to the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-1. The French had been so deeply impressed with a sense of the danger for France of a co-operation between anti-French forces in Germany and in Spain that a mere motion to place on the Spanish throne a member of the House of Hohenzollern sufficed to inflame French feelings against Prussia into a war-fever which was not allayed even when the tentative project was unreservedly abandoned. 'The Franco-Prussian War of 1870-1 could be described, no less accurately than the last

¹ See also pp. 188-9, below.

phase of the General War of 1672–1713, as a ‘war of the Spanish Succession’.¹ It was all the more remarkable that in 1936–7 the French Right were, to all outward seeming, unmoved by German military activities in the steadily expanding part of Spain under the Nationalists’ control, and particularly on France’s own south-western border at Bilbao.²

The truth seems to be that the outbreak of the war in Spain almost immediately after the victory of the Popular Front in the elections in France of the 26th April and 3rd May, 1936, had produced a deep effect on most French minds which was intrinsically the same on Right and Left alike. The effect was to excite ‘ideological’ passions to a degree at which these eclipsed patriotic feelings. In this situation the Left in France were fortunate in being able to give rein to their ‘ideological’ sympathy for the Left in Spain without exposing themselves to the charge of being disloyal to France, since the national interest of France, as well as the partisan feelings of the French Left, demanded a victory for the Madrid Government and a defeat for the Spanish Nationalists. On the other hand, the French Right could not wish for the Nationalists’ triumph without wishing for a denouement in Spain which would not be to their own country’s advantage. But the difficulty of reconciling these conflicting allegiances to country

¹ On this sentence a French critic has made the following comment: ‘If, as far as the “Ems Telegram”, it is quite possible to speak of a “Spanish Succession crisis” it would seem that, after Bismarck’s dinner party with Moltke and Roon on the evening of the 13th July, 1870, the war can only be described as a war of German unification. Where Napoleon III saw an opportunity to win a diplomatic success of prestige, Bismarck saw his way towards the establishment of a German Empire by military means.’

² It is possible that the views of the French Right were coloured to some extent by the fact that the German intervention on behalf of the Spanish Nationalists was on a smaller scale and received considerably less publicity than Italian intervention. The prospect that General Franco’s victory might lead to a predominance of Italian influence in Spain, and even perhaps to the establishment of Italian naval bases in the Balearics, was no doubt less terrifying than the prospect of a purely German hegemony would have been, especially to those sections of French opinion which had warmly approved of the policy that had culminated in the visit of Monsieur Laval to Rome in January 1935 and in the signature of the Franco-Italian agreements of the 7th January, 1935 (see the *Survey for 1935*, vol. i, Part I, section (v)). In the eyes of the French Right the German danger to France in Spain seems to have appeared to be mainly diplomatic, and, on this showing, to have worn an essentially different appearance from the patently military men of the German danger to France in the Rhineland. The ‘anaesthetization’ of the French Right in respect of the menace arising from the ‘Axis’ Powers intervention in Spain seems also partly to have been induced by a fine spray of sedative assurances from Spanish Nationalist quarters, to which the French Right were rendered highly susceptible by their own ‘ideological’ pre-disposition.

and to class does not seem to have given the French Right any very deep misgiving or acute discomfort. The explanation appears to be that, during these critical years, the spectre of German militarism was crowded out of the French Right's field of mental vision by the, to their eyes, still more horrid spectre of 'Red Revolution' let loose, no longer in some remote Scythian desert on the farther side of a broad insulating belt of German barbarism, but in the very heart of the Latin World. To such French minds, the orgy of murder, pillage, arson and warfare that had broken out in Spain after the triumph there of the Frente Popular was a dreadful warning of the anarchy that might spring out of the epidemic of industrial unrest that had subsequently broken out in France after the triumph there of the Front Populaire. Monsieur Blum might protest with as much truth as sincerity that this panic fear was the illusory offspring of a false analogy;¹ yet in the minds of the French Right the bogey thrrove, and, in thriving, 'worked for the' Nazi 'King of Prussia' more effectively than could have been foreseen by Herr Hitler himself when he first conceived the brilliant idea² of using this bogey as a stalking horse behind which he could carry out his own manœuvres without spoiling his own game by unmasking it to the Western democracies at a stage when it might still be in their power to make effective counter-moves. Unless the attitude of the French Right can be accounted for by some such explanation as this, the rôle of France in the Spanish tragedy must remain an enigma.

(d) THE INTERESTS AND MOTIVES OF THE BRITISH

The British interests that were touched, and the British motives that were brought into play, by the war in Spain were closely akin to the French interests and motives that have been examined above; and while this fundamental identity was qualified on the surface by obvious differences of national tradition and character, there was one superficial difference in the political situation of the two countries at the time which had less effect than might perhaps have been expected *a priori*. The Spanish policy of the French and British Governments was substantially the same notwithstanding the fact that in Great Britain a Conservative régime was in power, under the name of a 'National Government', during these years, while in France a Popular Front had won a general election and formed a Govern-

¹ Even in Spain it was not until after the triumph of the Popular Front had been followed by the outbreak of local war that the outrages had mounted to their terrible climax.

² See vol. i, Part I, pp. 37-9.

ment just before the Spanish war broke out. One reason for this similarity of policy was perhaps a similarity of temper which went deeper than differences of nationality, class, or party. On this deeper level there was a strong reluctance in British and in French souls to take the initiative in any course of action involving a palpable risk of immediate war,¹ and this underlying popular attitude was probably more accountable than any other single factor for the Government's Spanish policy in Great Britain as well as in France. Yet an English observer might pause to reflect that this pursuit of peace here and now 'at almost any price'² was an even greater portent—and, by the same token, a still harder exercise of virtue—in the neighbouring democracy than in his own country. The Blum-Baldwin policy in regard to Spain ran counter to the French craving for security and to the French habit of following out trains of thought or action to their logical conclusions. On the other hand, the same policy was in tune with the British habit of catching trains at the last moment and the British dislike of 'meeting trouble half-way'. It was therefore perhaps as natural that the British Government should make the non-intervention policy towards Spain their own as it was certainly surprising to find this policy originating, not in Downing Street, but on the Quai d'Orsay.

With this preface we may now attempt to analyse the different currents of feeling, and to gauge the effects of their interplay, in Great Britain, on the lines of our foregoing examination of the corresponding political forces in France.

In Great Britain, as in France, public policy in the Spanish affair was influenced by 'ideological' sympathies and antipathies towards the two warring camps in the Peninsula; and while these 'ideological' passions were possibly less violent on the British than they were on the French side of the Channel, they were at the same time perhaps more remarkable. It was particularly surprising to see such feelings affecting the judgment of an English 'governing class'³ whose *arcانum*

¹ See pp. 137-8, above.

² 'It is a true saying that to keep this country at peace is a great contribution to the peace of Europe; and, whatever may be said about "peace at any price", if the Right Honourable Gentleman [Mr. Lloyd George] puts it "peace at almost any price", I shall scarcely quarrel with him.'—Mr Eden in the House of Commons at Westminster on the 25th June, 1937. (This passage is also quoted in volume i, on p. 50.)

³ In the period under review this English 'governing class' was, of course, represented on both sides of the House of Commons. The Labour as well as the Conservative front bench was partly occupied by 'public school men', and the Trades Union wing of the Labour Party was in effect a kind of 'sub-governing class' with its own sense of tradition and its own concern for the safeguarding of vested interests.

imperium, ever since the Restoration of A.D. 1660, had been to keep sentiment out of politics. The British 'War of the Spanish Obsession',¹ which played its 'ideological' accompaniment to the grimmer warfare in Spain itself, was fought on diverse fields: in the Houses of Parliament at Westminster (where it infused an exotic animus into the usually temperate contests of party politics), on platforms all over the country; in the organs of the British Press; and even in the rear of the two contending armies in the Peninsula, where a continual stream of British visitors—Members of Parliament, students, women, clergy, and what not—circulated behind the front on either side (though it was rare for the same English visitors to make the round of both sides on their Spanish tour). There was a still more curious contest over the Basque children who were taken off in British ships from the Biscay coast and were given hospitality in Great Britain at the time in May 1937 when the autonomous Government of the Three Basque Provinces was being overthrown by the Nationalist forces in a campaign in which the air weapon was indiscriminately and intensively employed against the civil population.² While the British philanthropists who salvaged these children and gave them hospitality were no doubt disinterestedly concerned to carry out an urgent piece of humanitarian work, the Basque children became the storm-centre of a British 'ideological' struggle to denigrate or whitewash the Franco régime. While one party pointed to the presence of these children in Great Britain as evidence of the atrociousness of General Franco's behaviour, another party pressed for their repatriation on the ground that their stay in Great Britain was being unnecessarily prolonged for the purpose of blackening General Franco's face.

This British propaganda warfare over the Basque children illustrates one unfortunate effect of the impact of 'ideological' sympathies upon British politics. The effect was to confuse issues and to camouflage motives in a fog of insincerity. In much of the British public controversy over the Spanish question, the authors of arguments that might be cogent in themselves were suspect of putting forward those arguments for reasons which were not avowed and which might have little to do with the merits of the case.

For example, the parliamentary Opposition in the United Kingdom repeatedly accused the Government of ignoring British strategic and political interests in their Spanish policy, and they imputed this alleged dereliction of public duty on the Government's part to an

¹ Mr. Eden in the House of Commons at Westminster on the 25th June, 1937.

² See p. 393, below.

'ideological' prejudice against the Republican Government and in favour of the Nationalist Government which, in the contention of the Opposition, was now proving a stronger motive than patriotism in the minds of the so-called 'governing class' from which Ministers and their supporters in Parliament were mostly drawn. The facts which the Opposition brought forward in support of their charge were sometimes impressive (as will appear from the summary given below), and they often caused the Government considerable embarrassment. Yet the suspicion remained that the Opposition were not primarily concerned to safeguard British sea-routes in Spanish waters, that they would not have shown the same zeal in exposing the Government's alleged neglect of British interests if the dangerous insurgents in Spain had been men of the Left and the innocuous legitimists reactionaries; and that, if the Labour and Liberal Parties had found themselves in power, like their 'opposite numbers' in the French Popular Front, at the moment when the Spanish War broke out, they might have adopted the policy that was actually adopted by MM. Blum and Baldwin, and have made this choice on grounds which were admittedly honourable in Monsieur Blum's case and which ought therefore not to be denied the benefit of the doubt in Mr. Baldwin's case in default of positive evidence.

A corresponding taint of insincerity hung about the arguments brought forward by 'the National Government' and their supporters to show that, even if the war in Spain should be won by the Spanish Nationalists and their Italian and German allies, British interests were not in danger of suffering detriment in consequence. It might turn out to be true, as forecast on the Government side, that the only foreigners who would retain their popularity in Spain when the war was over would be those who had practised non-intervention *bona fide*. It might be true that, even if a victorious Fascist-Clerical coalition in Spain had no liking for British 'democracy', they would find it impossible to reconstruct a devastated Spain without borrowing on the London money market. It might be true that the Castilian *éthos* was so proudly independent that it would refuse to submit to even the lightest foreign yoke, however tactful the two 'Fascist' Powers might be in the assertion of their hegemony over a Spain which they had 'rescued from the Reds', and however attractive the 'Fascist' ideology might be to at any rate one wing of General Franco's followers.¹ Nevertheless, a detached observer who heard

¹ In the mouths of British Conservatives this forecast was often put in the form of a dictum on the Spanish national character. The Spaniards, it was asserted in these British quarters, were such obstinate individualists that

these forecasts retailed in British Conservative circles might be left with a suspicion that, whether or not they were destined to be borne out by the event, they were not being made by their makers on their merits, but were being put forward as formulae for attaching a clean bill of British patriotism to a Spanish policy which the British Government and their supporters had made up their minds in any case to pursue from motives which might be partly 'ideological' and partly pacific, but which had little to do with 'British interests' in the traditional sense of the term.

This atmosphere of insincerity must be allowed for by the reader

it was inconceivable that, when once the war was over, they would allow the Italians and Germans to retain any hold on Spain, however deeply they might be beholden to their foreign allies for their victory. In the experience of the writer of this *Survey*, the British Conservatives who made this assertion never had up their sleeve any evidence to bring out in support of it; and the impression was left on his mind that the assertion was a piece of 'wistful thinking' and not an inference from any observed facts. The assertion was, in fact, exposed to a cross-fire of criticism. In the first place, even if it could be surmised (as was not unlikely) that the Spaniards would detest anything in the nature of an Italo-German hegemony, that would be no guarantee at all that they would be able either to prevent its imposition or to shake it off. Nor, on the face of it, was an extreme individualism a national characteristic that augured well for the maintenance of national independence. It was an extreme individualism, expressed in the *liberum veto*, that had cost the Poles their national independence and unity in the eighteenth century. Might not a similar foible exact a similar penalty in twentieth-century Spain? Might not the 'Axis' Powers confirm their grip on Spain by playing off Spanish Fascists against Spanish Carlists, and this Spanish Fascist against that other? Or, if Italy and Germany eventually competed with one another for the exclusive control of Spain, might not Germany make use of the Falangists as her pawns in an attempt to push the Carlists, the Catholic Church, General Franco and Signor Mussolini off the Spanish chess-board? Again, the history of Spain in the modern age did not bear out the British Conservatives' contention that the Spaniards were apt to be prompt in expelling from Spanish soil the foreign auxiliaries who were called in from time to time to fight in Spanish family quarrels. For example, the rock of Gibraltar had been seized in A.D. 1704 by a foreign Power which was then intervening in a war between respective Spanish supporters of a Hapsburg and a Bourbon claimant to the throne of Spain. That Spanish civil war had come to an end ten years later, in 1714, and the outcome, as it happened, had been a defeat for the pro-Hapsburg party which the British interlopers were supporting. Yet in A.D. 1938, 234 years after the capture of Gibraltar by the British and 224 years after the close of the Spanish war in which this strategic point had fallen into British hands, the Spaniards had not yet restored the territorial integrity of Spain by dislodging the British occupants of that Spanish rock. If the Italian occupants of Majorca and the German occupants of Bilbao could count upon a two-hundred-and-thirty-four-years' tenure of their respective holdings, they might well be content with the length of their Spanish leases. It was strange that the British Conservatives, of all people, should have ignored the test case of Gibraltar when they counted on the Spanish character to rid Spain promptly of German and Italian interlopers who were faithfully following a promising British precedent.

of the following account of the British debate on the Spanish question. The narrative is divided, for convenience, between the three heads of 'ideological' sympathies and antipathies,¹ strategical interests, and economic interests;² and these are dealt with successively in this order.

In the 'ideological' arena an early move in the British partisan warfare was made on the 20th July, 1936, when the leader of the Labour Party, Mr. Attlee, at a conference in London of the Labour and Co-operative Movements, moved, and secured the adoption of, a resolution pledging 'all practicable support to our Spanish comrades in their struggle to defend freedom and democracy in Spain'. On the 27th July the National Council of Labour opened a fund for the relief of Spanish workers in distress, and particularly of the women and children. On the 16th August the leader of the British Communist Party, Mr. Harry Pollitt, delivered a speech at Manchester in which he denounced the 'Fascist' Powers' intervention in Spain, called for pressure on the British Government to lift the ban on the supply of British arms to the Spanish Government, alluded to the probable strategic consequences of a Fascist victory in Spain, and prophesied that such an outcome of the war in Spain would precipitate a civil war in France. The same speaker spoke again in the same sense in the same city on the 23rd.

Deputations of leading representatives of Organized Labour were received by the Foreign Secretary, Mr. Eden, on the 19th August and by Lord Cranborne on the 1st September, 1936. On the 28th August a manifesto, denouncing the intervention in Spain of Italy, Germany and Portugal, was issued by a representative conference of the Labour Movement. At the Foreign Office on the 1st September, and again in Plymouth on the 4th, Labour expressed 'grave concern at the delay in bringing the Non-Intervention Agreement into force'. This formula might be read as a tacit acquiescence in the non-intervention policy itself, so long as it was carried out honestly by all Powers; and, in fact, at the Labour Conference in London on the 28th August it had been found easier to agree in denouncing intervention by the 'Fascist' Powers than to decide whether the British

¹ Under this head it has been found convenient to deal, as well, with the distinct, but cognate, question of the claim, on the British Government's part, that the non-intervention policy, even if not effective in preventing foreign intervention in Spain, did at least effectively prevent the war from spreading beyond the limits of Spain into the rest of Europe.

² On all three heads there was a parallelism between the interests and motives of the British and the French, for the French, as well as the British, had a considerable economic stake in Spain, in addition to their strategic interests and 'ideological' sympathies.

Labour Movement itself should oppose non-intervention or should acquiesce in it. In this debate the issue was not forced, but the sense of the meeting seems to have been in favour of acquiescence. The principal 'anti-non-interventionist' in British Labour circles was Mr. Herbert Morrison, but in this matter his forceful personality did not prevail. A decision to adhere to the policy of non-intervention was taken on the 9th September, 1936, by the National Council of Labour (representing the Labour Party, the Parliamentary Labour Party, and the Trades Union Congress) at a special meeting at Plymouth; and at the same place next day this decision was endorsed by the T.U.C.¹ At a meeting on the 30th September the National Council of Labour once again limited their action to a protest against alleged infractions of the Non-Intervention Agreement by the 'Fascist' Powers, without attacking the policy in principle. A resolution to the same effect was carried, against some opposition, at a meeting of the Labour Party Conference at Edinburgh on the 5th October. The mover of the resolution, Mr. Greenwood, met the Labour critics of non-intervention in this debate with the argument—so often used against the Opposition by spokesmen of 'the National Government'—that the Spanish Nationalists, and not the Spanish Republican Government, stood to gain on the balance from that unrestricted competition in supplying both sides with armaments which would inevitably be let loose if the Non-Intervention Agreement were abandoned. The carriage of the resolution by 1,836,000 block votes to 519,000 was a victory of the head over the heart of the British Labour Movement. On the 8th October Mr. Greenwood and Mr. Attlee travelled from Edinburgh to London to call on the Prime Minister, and they reported back the results of their interview to the Conference next day. Thereupon the National Executive Committee of the Labour Party published a statement containing the demand that there should be a speedy investigation of the alleged breaches of the Non-Intervention Agreement, that the findings should be made public, and that if the agreement were found either to have been ineffective through lack of supervision or to have been definitely violated, then the Spanish Government should no longer be denied the exercise of their right to purchase arms abroad.

On the 19th October, 1936, Mr. Attlee asked the Prime Minister for an immediate summoning of Parliament, which was not due to reassemble until the 29th. On the 21st this request was refused by

¹ In the Liberal camp the same line was taken in resolutions passed by the Council of Action for Peace and Reconstruction on the 14th September and by the Liberal Council on the 16th.

Mr. Baldwin. On the 22nd the National Council of Labour called upon the Foreign Secretary, Mr. Eden, to expedite the investigation into the working of the Non-Intervention Agreement. On the 27th October, on the eve of the reassembly of Parliament at the regular date, the divergence of view in the Labour camp on the question of non-intervention was displayed once again in a speech, attacking the policy, by Mr. Morrison and in public comments on Mr. Morrison's speech from Mr. Attlee and Sir Walter Citrine.

In the House of Commons on the 29th October, 1936, the merits and the working of the Non-Intervention Agreement were discussed in a debate in which Mr. Eden opened, and Mr. Baldwin replied, for the Government, while the Opposition was represented by Mr. Greenwood and by Sir Archibald Sinclair. In substance, Mr. Greenwood repeated the demands of the statement issued at the Labour Conference in Edinburgh, while Mr. Eden and Mr. Baldwin deprecated the suggestion that the non-intervention policy might have to be given up as a bad job. As the Prime Minister put it,

We might just as well say that a dam is not effective because there were some leaks in it. If there are some leaks in the dam it may at any rate keep the water out for the time being, and you can stop up the leaks. It is a very different thing from sweeping away the dam altogether

The last but one of these points of Mr. Baldwin's was developed by Mr. Eden in a speech made to his constituents at Leamington on the 20th November:

It is unhappily true that that agreement has not been as strictly observed by all as we could wish. That fact, however regrettable, does not cause us in any way to modify our decision in favour of the principle of non-intervention. Because some who should be firemen take a hand now and again at feeding the flames, that is no reason why the whole fire brigade should leave their posts and join in fanning Europe into a furnace.

In the House of Commons on the 1st December, 1936, the President of the Board of Trade, Mr. Runciman, moved the second reading of the Merchant Shipping (Carriage of Munitions to Spain) Bill,¹ and the debate ended in the passage of the motion by 239 votes to 132. On the 18th December Spain was again the main topic of a debate on foreign affairs in the House of Commons on the motion for adjournment. In both these Parliamentary debates Mr. Eden reiterated the point that the main value of the Non-Intervention Agreement lay in its preventing the Spanish war from spreading, and that this

¹ See also p. 259, below.

function, at any rate, was fulfilled by it effectively. In a speech made on the 14th December, 1936, at Bradford, Mr. Eden used Mr. Baldwin's simile of the leaky dam,¹ and he also echoed, once again, the Prime Minister's argument that the Non-Intervention Agreement prevented the spread of the war, and his warning against succumbing to either of the two mutually antipathetic 'totalitarian ideologies'.

Let us . . . win an ever larger body of opinion to reject those dangerous doctrines which would have us divide the world into dictatorships of the Right and Left. This country will have none of either. Nor will it align its foreign policy with any group of states because they support the one or the other.

At a meeting of trades union delegates in London on the 11th January, 1937, a resolution was passed denouncing German and Italian breaches of the Non-Intervention Agreement and censuring the British Government 'for its discrimination against the legal Government of Spain'. On the 10th January the British Government issued a notice calling attention to the fact that the Foreign Enlistment Act was applicable in the case of the Spanish war. This was a step in an Anglo-French move to cope with the problem created by the despatch of technicians and troops to Spain, under the label of 'volunteers', by the three 'totalitarian' Powers.² At the same time the notice caused heart-burnings on the Left in Great Britain —the more so because it had been issued without waiting for any simultaneous corresponding steps to be taken in Berlin or Rome. This was one of the topics of a debate on the motion for adjournment in the House of Commons on the 19th January, 1937. In the same debate Mr. Eden declared once more that the form of government in Spain was the Spanish people's business; that it was not a British interest that Spain should have this rather than that form of government; and that 'for us to enter into a championship of that kind would be to enter into the war of rival ideologies which we have condemned'.

On the 8th February, 1937, the Treasury Front Bench in the House of Commons was subjected to two fusillades from the rear. Complaints of alleged partiality in the Spanish news bulletins of the British Broadcasting Corporation were made by Conservative members in the form of questions to the Postmaster-General; and accusations that the Spanish Government was not the democratic régime that it purported to be, but was financed and directed from

¹ Mr. Eden made use of this simile again nine months later, in his speech before the Assembly at Geneva on the 20th September, 1937 (see p. 357, below).

² See pp. 284 *segg.*, below.

Moscow, were made from the same quarter in the form of questions to the Foreign Secretary. On the 16th February there was made public a report on the religious situation in the Republican part of Spain by a party of Anglican and Free Church divines who had visited the Spanish Government's territory. The evidence in this report on the anti-religious movement in the Spanish Government's camp was the more impressive in as much as these British witnesses were evidently not in sympathy with the Spanish Nationalists. On the 26th April there was published in *The Manchester Guardian* a letter of the 23rd April from another British Christian delegation which had been visiting the Republican part of Spain. The impressions of this group, which had been led by the Dean of Canterbury, seem to have been more favourable to the Spanish Government than those of their precursors. On the 29th April the bombing of Guernica was strongly denounced in a public statement by the Archbishop of York, and a resolution on the same subject in similar terms was passed on the 30th April, 1937, at a League of Nations Union meeting in the Albert Hall under the chairmanship of Lord Cecil. On the other side, the Catholic Archbishop of Westminster, Dr. Hinsley, in his Trinity Sunday Pastoral letter, castigated 'leaders of religion who' had 'been so ready to make arranged tours of part of another country'. Dr. Hinsley himself submitted that 'all who are not wilfully blind see the battle raging between Christian civilization and the worst form of paganism that has ever darkened the Earth'. In the House of Commons on the 9th June, strictures in the form of parliamentary questions were passed by Conservative Members on the Dean of Canterbury.¹

In a debate in the House of Commons on the 25th June, 1937, important contributions on the Spanish question were made by Mr. Neville Chamberlain, who had succeeded Mr. Baldwin as Prime Minister on the 28th May, 1937. Mr. Chamberlain made the two, by now familiar, points that the passionate feeling evoked abroad by the war in Spain was a peculiar, and a specially dangerous, feature in the Spanish situation, and that the non-intervention policy was effectively preventing the war from spreading and was thereby 'achieving the object which has been at the back of our policy the whole time'.

After touching upon the *Deutschland* and *Leipzig* incidents, the Prime Minister uttered the following dramatic peroration:

I have read that in the high mountains there are sometimes conditions

¹ The practice of visits to Spain on the part of British subjects had been attacked and defended from opposite sides of the House of Commons at question time on the 21st April.

to be found when an ineptious move, or even a sudden loud exclamation, may start an avalanche. That is just the condition in which we are finding ourselves to-day. I believe, although the snow may be perilously poised, it has not yet begun to move, and if we can all exercise caution, patience, and self-restraint we may yet be able to save the peace of Europe.

Thereafter, in a speech delivered on the 30th June at Walton-on-Thames, Mr. Lloyd George declared that, over the Non-Intervention Agreement, British Ministers had been fooled all along—and had been aware all along that they were being fooled—by the Dictators. On the other hand Mr. Winston Churchill commended the Government's Spanish policy in a speech delivered on the 4th July at Wanstead. A demonstration on Spain, condemning the results of the Government's policy, was held by the London Labour Party on the 11th July, 1937, in Trafalgar Square, with Mr. Herbert Morrison as the principal speaker. In the House of Commons on the 15th July there was a debate on the British Government's proposals to the Non-Intervention Committee which had been published on the preceding day;¹ and this time the Government had the support both of Mr. Churchill and of Sir Archibald Sinclair. On the 27th July the National Council of Labour issued a statement contending that, in the light of a year's trial of the non-intervention policy, the Spanish Government ought now at last to be allowed to exercise their right of purchasing arms and munitions abroad, and the same demand was put forward in a manifesto published by the Spain Campaign Committee of the Labour Party on the 8th November. This manifesto also demanded the immediate withdrawal of foreign troops from Spain and the refusal of belligerent rights to the Nationalists. On the 6th December strictures, in the form of parliamentary questions, were made by Conservative Members of the House of Commons on visits that had been paid to the Republican part of Spain by two Labour Members, Miss Ellen Wilkinson and Mr. Philip Noel Baker. On the 9th December, a Conservative Member asked for—but was not granted—an opportunity for debating a motion of censure on the conduct of the leader of the Opposition, Mr. Attlee, who, on a visit to the Republican part of Spain on which he was still absent, was alleged by his critic to have broken the undertaking (which was required at this time of all British subjects applying to His Majesty's Government for a visa for Spain) not to take part in Spain in any activities liable to be interpreted as inconsistent with the British Government's policy of non-intervention. On the 13th December,

¹ See pp. 331 *seqq.*, below.

after his return from abroad, Mr. Attlee made in the House of Commons a personal statement on the point, and, at the instance of the Prime Minister, this statement was accepted by the House without discussion. Mr. Attlee gave an account of his impressions of the Spanish situation at a meeting in the Albert Hall on the 19th December. On the 21st December in the House of Commons, in a colloquy between Mr. Attlee and Mr. Chamberlain, the Prime Minister made what was perhaps the clearest declaration, up to date, of what the paramount aim of his policy was.

The right hon. gentleman described the policy of non-intervention as one dictated by expediency, and he said that the expediency had failed . . . What does he mean by expediency? If he means that the policy of non-intervention was designed to prevent the conflict spreading beyond the borders of Spain—and I agree that that was the object of the policy —then, so far from failing, it has been a complete success

From the foregoing chronicle it will be seen that, in a British controversy over Spain which had been going on for not much less than eighteen months by the close of the calendar year 1937, neither side had shifted its ground appreciably. Both sides alike genuinely believed themselves to be championing the causes of Democracy and Peace; and neither party made much impression on the other's mind because there was little or no attempt to agree upon a definition of terms and therefore little or no real exchange of ideas.

British Labour and Liberalism were championing Democracy in an exposed outpost in Spain because they feared that, if this outpost were to fall, the advancing tide of anti-democratic forces might then sweep over the whole of Western Europe. The British Conservatives were sincere and loyal upholders of Democracy, like their political opponents;¹ but, like these again, they rallied to the defence of Democracy at the point where they saw it endangered; and for the British Conservatives that point was not an outpost in Spain; it was the citadel of Democracy in the United Kingdom itself. In Spain the Conservatives saw no Democracy; when they looked at the Spanish Republican camp, they simply saw red; and when they thought of how to save Democracy in Great Britain, their first and last counsel—or impulse—was to keep the United Kingdom clear of a Spanish

¹ The British Conservatives' devotion to Democracy at this time was not only genuine; it was also no more than what was to be expected, considering that the responsible representative parliamentary system of government *à l'Anglaise* (which was what all parties in Great Britain meant by Democracy 'in the last analysis') had given 'the National Government' in Great Britain a tenure of power of which the end was not yet in sight at the time of writing in the spring of 1938.

arena which, as the British Conservatives saw it, was the scene of a conflict between two 'ideologies' which were both of them equally un-British, though one of the two might be less distasteful than the other to British Conservative palates.

As champions of Peace, again, the British Conservatives—or at least those of the older generation—considered that they were serving the cause of Peace best by striving to keep their own country out of war to-day,¹ whereas, to the mind of the Left, a peace just for their own country and just in their own time was no peace worth having. What the Left were striving for was a lasting peace for a Great Society, that for Liberals (in the broader sense of the word) embraced the whole living generation of mankind throughout the inhabited world. And they were moved to scorn and indignation by the cynical levity (as it seemed to them) with which their Conservative fellow-countrymen were sacrificing the only peace worthy of the name for the sake of a temporary accommodation which at best would be unconstructive and at worst might be dishonourable.

It will be seen that, in their respective conceptions of Peace, the two parties in Great Britain were at the farthest remove from one another; yet for Peace, as they respectively conceived it, both parties were sincerely concerned, if sincerity can be measured in terms of sacrifice. For the sake of Peace, the British Left refrained from positively declaring war on the policy of non-intervention, even when this policy could be seen to be working out more and more disadvantageously for the Spanish camp with which the British Left were 'ideologically' in sympathy. It was for the sake of Peace, again, at least in part, that the British Conservatives adopted Nelson's device of putting their spy-glass to their blind eye when they were exhorted by the Left to consider, before it was too late, the effect on British strategic interests of an Italo-German hold upon Spain and her insular and overseas possessions. The strategic stakes involved² were so great and so conspicuous that it is hard to believe that they can have escaped the notice of a British 'governing class' which was accustomed, by a long tradition, to view the international landscape in its strategic aspect, and whose forbears had known so well how to turn the strategic assets of the Iberian Peninsula to account for Great Britain's national advantage. The British 'governing classes' unwillingness, in the Spanish crisis that overtook them in 1936, to take a serious view of the strategic consequences which might follow from a definitive defeat of the Republican cause in Spain, has doubtless to be accounted for as a composite result of a number of

¹ See pp. 137–8, above.

² See p. 130, above, and pp. 183–4, below.

convergent causes, but all the arguments which British Conservatives could bring forward in defence of their attitude¹ would not suffice to account for their departure, on the strategic question, from the tradition of their forefathers. This change of attitude was so profound that it can only be accounted for by a cause of corresponding dimensions. In 1936-7, it almost looked as though, during the post-war years, the British 'governing class' had become unconscious converts to a pacifism which had failed to capture more than an insignificant minority of the Liberal and Labour Parties.

The pacific reaction of the British governing class to the touch-stone of the Spanish crisis was something so new and so remarkable² and so momentous in its possible influence on the future course of international affairs that it deserves closer inspection. It will be convenient to examine, separately, first the general proposition that a Power which had been scrupulous in abiding by the Non-Intervention Agreement would have in the end a better position in regard to Spain than any Power which had broken its word by entering the Spanish arena; and, second, the at least apparent unconcern of the British Government and their supporters about the future of particular strategic points such as Gibraltar, the *presidios*, the Spanish Zone of Morocco, and the Balearic Islands.

On the general point, Mr. Eden laid down, in his speech of the 14th December, 1936, at Bradford, that the British Government felt a deep interest in the maintenance of the integrity of Spain and Spanish possessions, and that it was a consideration of great moment to them that, when Spain emerged from her present troubles, that integrity should remain intact and unmenaced from any quarter. In the House of Commons at Westminster on the 19th January, 1937, Mr. Eden gave his grounds for expecting to see this particular British interest in Spain respected:

If any hon. member believes that as the outcome of this civil war in Spain any single foreign Power—or pair of foreign Powers—is going to dominate Spain for a generation, to rule its life, to direct its foreign policies, then I am convinced he is mistaken. . . Unless the whole past history of Spain is belied in this conflict the great mass of the proud Spanish people will feel the least ill-will to those nations which have intervened the least. If we take the long view, and in an issue of this kind it is the long view that counts, intervention in Spain is not only bad humanity, it is bad politics.

¹ See pp. 162-3, above.

² 'The danger is so obvious that it is hard to understand the eagerness with which some of the most vocally patriotic sections of the British public desire the rebels' success.'—Captain B. H. Liddell Hart, in a lecture delivered in London at the Livingstone Hall, on the 14th April, 1937.

The British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs recalled and reaffirmed this forecast in a speech delivered at Liverpool on the 12th April, 1937; and in the House of Commons on the 1st November, 1937, he again deprecated the view that a Nationalist victory in Spain would result in 'a foreign policy directed against this country'—since, as he contended, there were 'strong forces working in another direction. forces of trade and commerce, forces of geography'.

On the 4th July, 1937, at Coughton Court in Warwickshire, Mr. Eden insisted once more that 'the maintenance of the territorial integrity of Spain' was a matter of direct interest to the British Government, whose views on that point were 'shared by both parties in Spain, however much they may disagree on all else'; and he also reminded his audience that disinterestedness in regard to Spain's form of government

must not be taken to mean disinterestedness where British interests are concerned on the land or sea frontiers of Spain or the trade routes that pass her by.

This point was sharpened by the Foreign Secretary in a speech delivered at Llandudno on the 15th October, 1937:¹

I want to make a clear distinction between non-intervention and indifference. We are not indifferent to the maintenance of the territorial integrity of Spain. We are not indifferent to the foreign policy of any future Spanish Government. We are not indifferent to the complications which may arise in the Mediterranean as the result of the intervention of others. We are not indifferent to vital British interests in the Mediterranean. A clear distinction must be made between non-intervention in what is purely a Spanish affair and non-intervention where British interests are at stake.

In regard to the future of particular strategic points in or adjoining Spanish territory or territorial waters, the question which loomed largest in British eyes was the security of the British fortress and naval base at Gibraltar and the freedom (in defensive terms) or command (in offensive terms) of the passage through the Straits.

The French allegation that the Germans were securing a military foothold in the Spanish *presidios* of Ceuta and Melilla, on the African coast of the Straits, and also in the surrounding Spanish Zone of Morocco,² was dealt with by Mr. Eden in the debate in the House of Commons on the 19th January, 1937. On this occasion the Foreign Secretary announced that the results of the investigations into these reported German activities were 'generally of a reassuring character so far as' concerned 'the alleged landing, or preparations for landing,

¹ See p. 367, below.

² For the history of this incident see pp. 281-3, below.

of German troops'. He added that the British Government would continue carefully to watch the situation in this region, since they were closely concerned in the maintenance of the position in the Spanish Zone as laid down by the treaties in force. On the 1st February Mr. Eden, in answer to a parliamentary question on the same subject, declared that H.M. Government were 'not aware that any treaty to which they are party regarding Morocco has been infringed'. On the 8th July, 1937, when, in the House of Commons, Mr. Mander 'asked the Prime Minister whether consideration had been given by the Government and Committee of Imperial Defence to the problems that would arise in the event of a German-Italian control of Spain and the acquisition of submarine bases and aerodromes by these Powers; and whether, in view of the threat to British communications in the Mediterranean and the British Empire generally, he would state to what extent it would be necessary to increase the Army, Navy, and Air Force above the present programme and the cost likely to be involved in the above eventuality', Mr. Chamberlain replied that the answer to the first part of the question was in the negative, and that therefore the second part did not arise.

It will have been noticed that the assurance given by Mr. Eden to the House of Commons on the 19th January, 1937, regarding German activities on the shores of the Straits of Gibraltar, was limited to the single topic of the landing of German troops. On the 23rd June, 1937, however, Mr. Eden replied in reassuring terms in the House of Commons to a request for information regarding the alleged fortification of Ceuta, reports of which were giving rise to anxiety on account of the threat to Gibraltar which such fortifications would constitute.

As a result [said Mr. Eden on this occasion] of inquiries which have been made in regard to fortifications on the Spanish Moroccan coast, His Majesty's Government do not consider that the position is such as to call for representations to the authorities in the Spanish Zone.

He added that 'rumours as to the existence of German heavy guns at Ceuta' had 'not been confirmed'.

During July 1937, and again after Parliament reassembled in October, a series of pointed questions on the military situation at Gibraltar and in the Straits (as well as in the Balearic Islands)¹ were

¹ Hostile submarine and air bases on the Balearic Islands would threaten the British sea-route through the Mediterranean less closely than hostile bases either on the shores of the Straits of Gibraltar or on the Island of Pantellaria in the Straits of Biskra. The main British strategic interest in the Balearic

addressed to the Treasury Bench from all quarters of the House. In reply to one such question on the 12th July, Mr. Eden admitted a knowledge that batteries on the coast between Algeciras and Tarifa had been installed by General Franco, but declared that his information did not bear out reports that German experts had assisted in mounting these batteries. On the 19th July Lord Cranborne answered a number of searching questions from Mr. Winston Churchill regarding the provenance, range, and purpose of heavy howitzers which were alleged to have been mounted in Spanish territory near Gibraltar. Could these guns 'quickly destroy the dockyard at Gibraltar and render the bay untenable to His Majesty's ships'? Could they 'obstruct or close the Straits'? 'Where were they sited and at whose instigation had they been erected'? 'Where had they come from? Were they from the foundries of Krupp or those of Ansaldo'? Lord Cranborne said that the guns in question appeared to have been mounted as a defence against future bombardments; that those which commanded the fortress were inferior to the guns which could be trained on them and therefore constituted no present menace; that they were not 12-in. howitzers but were of smallish calibre; and that although they fired from Spain across the Straits, they did not constitute a military menace in the opinion of military experts. On the 27th July, however, Sir Thomas Inskip admitted (in reply to Mr. Churchill again) that four large howitzers, which had been in the possession of Spain before the war, had been mounted overlooking the Straits; but he added that two of the four had been removed; and he did not think that any guns mounted in the Bay of Algeciras could 'be regarded as constituting any threat to Gibraltar'. In regard to Ceuta, Sir Thomas Inskip said that there had been 'additions to the existing armaments', but that the British Government had been

well aware of the guns, and, except that any gun anywhere is a potential threat to anything within its range, it cannot be said that these guns are a threat to Gibraltar or its shipping.

Islands was indirect but, by the same token, vital, because it touched one of the fundamental strategic interests of Great Britain's principal European ally, France (see p. 130, above, and pp. 184-5, below). It was perhaps mainly on this account that the question of non-Spanish control over the Balearic Islands was touched upon in the Parliament of the United Kingdom from time to time after the outbreak of the Spanish war. See, for instance, Mr. Baldwin's reply on the 29th October, 1936, to a question regarding the alleged landing of Italians on Iviza; Lord Plymouth's reply in the House of Lords on the 26th November, 1936, to a question from Lord Cecil about the position on Majorca; Mr. Eden's reference on the 19th January, 1937, to the notes regarding the integrity of Spanish territory accompanying the Anglo-Italian declaration of the 2nd January; and Mr. Lloyd George's speech in the debate on the 30th July, 1937.

The Government's critics returned to the attack on the 21st October, but on that occasion Mr. Hore-Belisha refused to impart to the House information which was in the Government's possession regarding the guns emplaced opposite Gibraltar. On the 2nd November, however, the Minister for War admitted that the guns on the Straits of Gibraltar were 'of various calibres from 12-in howitzers downwards'. On the Gibraltar side, he said, the batteries had been installed after the shelling of Algeciras, and as the big guns on this side were howitzers which were 'not normally installed for seaward purposes' it was 'a reasonable deduction that the defences have been improvised for the protection of Spanish Nationalist territory'. Mr. Hore-Belisha added that the guns on both sides of the Straits were 'of various dates and countries of origin', and he refused to elaborate this statement in response to further pressure from the Opposition. On the 9th November a question from Mr. Noel Baker elicited the information that there had been four 12-in howitzers on the northern shores of the Straits of Gibraltar but that two had been withdrawn, and that the remaining guns were 'not so sited as to be able to bombard the fortress or the harbour of Gibraltar'. Mr. Hore-Belisha refused again on this occasion to make an 'authoritative statement' regarding the origin of the howitzers.¹

Meanwhile, an exchange on the 28th October between Mr. Lloyd George and Admiral of the Fleet Sir Roger Keyes had shown that expert opinion did not necessarily confirm all the fears of the Government's critics in regard to the dangers of the situation.

I will say quite definitely [declared Sir Roger Keyes] that the possession of great guns on both sides of the Straits of Gibraltar will not prevent the passage of ships through the Straits if we retain command of the sea. . . . Guns on either shore of the Straits of Gibraltar could be masked by smoke and other means while ships were being passed through the Straits by night, and probably in the daytime also. If, however, the nation that possesses those guns had command of the sea and was able to patrol the Straits with surface craft, lay mine-fields and keep them maintained, then I grant the right hon. gentleman that it could close the Straits of Gibraltar.

Sir Roger Keyes referred to his own experience during the War of 1914-18 in the Straits of Dover, where he had been very often within range of powerful 12-in. and 15-in. guns—in reply to which Mr. Lloyd George pointed out that the analogy was imperfect, since in those

¹ It will be noted, however, that Sir Thomas Inskip had committed himself on the 27th July to the statement that these heavy howitzers had belonged to Spain before the war.

years the German guns on the shores of the Straits of Dover had been planted on one side only, not on both.

In this long-sustained parliamentary fencing-match a Labour and Liberal Opposition attacked a predominantly Conservative Government for alleged criminal negligence towards a vital British strategic interest, while the Government, aided by one of their back-bench supporters who was a retired Admiral of the Fleet, did their utmost to minimize the alleged danger. When this parliamentary passage of arms in 1937 is compared with the similar passages—not more than ten years old at this date—in which, in the same House, the same Labour and Liberal Opposition had attacked, and a Government of substantially the same complexion had defended, the construction of a naval base for the British Grand Fleet at Singapore, it becomes apparent that in the United Kingdom the parties of the Right and Left had positively exchanged their traditional rôles in the field of foreign policy, and that this inversion of rôles had taken place with extraordinary rapidity.¹

In 1937, the traditional Conservative rôle of exercising a jealous watchfulness over British strategic interests was being played by Mr. Winston Churchill alone; and his was the voice of one crying in the wilderness to an audience of retired Admirals and Generals who did not conceal their displeasure and embarrassment at hearing the dangerous subject raised. This state of mind in this year on the Government benches of the House of Commons was the more extraordinary considering what was the particular strategic point at issue. The point over which the alarm had been sounded by a statesman who had been First Lord of the Admiralty upon the outbreak of war in 1914 concerned the British Navy's command of the sea, on which British feeling was traditionally alert and sensitive, and not the unpopular subject of land-warfare on the Continent of Europe. Moreover, it concerned a strategic position—the Straits of Gibraltar—which was at this time certainly not less vital for the maintenance of British sea-power than it had been in the past.² Finally, it concerned a fortress and naval base of which the very name was, as it

¹ This rapid inversion of rôles was, no doubt, facilitated by the peculiarity of British parliamentary party politics, which were a kind of game in which the first and last duty of the opposing teams was to play against one another. So long as they were still playing vigorously on opposite sides in the parliamentary match, it was little more difficult for the party in power and the party in opposition to exchange the political goals at which they were aiming than it was for two football teams to exchange their goals when the referee's whistle sounded 'half-time'. So long as the play between the two teams went on, it seemed hardly to matter which team happened to be facing which way.

² See p. 183, below.

were, an epitome and emblem of the British Empire and a detonator, in times past, of the most violent British chauvinistic emotions.

In the dimmest north-east distance dawned Gibraltar grand and grey,

‘Here and here did England help me: How can I help England?’—say.

These lines in which a nineteenth-century English poet had exactly struck a dominant chord of feeling in contemporary English hearts would have been deprecated by a few English philosopher-statesmen of that age who held that the real foundations of the *Pax Britannica* were not British fortresses or British men-o’-war, but were British manufactures and trade and finance. In the year 1936 this doctrine of a nineteenth-century ‘Manchester School’ was being, not only preached, but also practised by a Government representing the political party which had stood for the opposing doctrine in the past. ‘The National Government’ who were in office in the United Kingdom during the Spanish war that had broken out in 1936 were manifestly, and indeed admittedly, counting upon British money-power, rather than upon British sea-power, to counteract the political effects of Italo-German military intervention in Spain and to draw that country into Great Britain’s orbit, even if Italian and German arms should succeed in bestowing a military victory upon the ‘Axis’ Powers’ Spanish *protégés*. Even in that event, so it was apparently calculated at the time in Downing Street, any Spanish Government—without regard either to their political affinities or to their military commitments—would find themselves constrained to seek accommodation in the London money-market in order to raise the foreign loan which, on this British line of argument, would be indispensable for the material reconstruction of a war-devastated country. Yet, as far as could be discerned at the time of writing in the spring of 1938, the indications were that British commercial and financial power would not be able in the twentieth century to continue to produce its nineteenth-century effects in the test case of Spain.

At the date of the outbreak of war in Spain in 1936, there was a flourishing export trade from Spain to Great Britain in mineral ores, wines and citrus-fruit. Of these three staple Spanish exports to Great Britain, the ores and wines were not only shipped by British merchants but were also extracted and produced, for the most part, by British enterprise; and British capital investments in Spain at this date were valued at about £40,000,000 sterling¹—a substantial

¹ The largest single unit in this aggregate of British investments in Spain was the Barcelona Power, Light and Traction Company—a company, regis-

figure, even though it amounted to only about eight per cent. of the contemporary value of the respective British investments in Argentina, Australia, Canada and India. The British imports from Spain which the British investments there helped to forward under normal conditions were immediately interfered with by the hostilities, and this in two ways. There was a disturbance or even supersession of ordinary civil activities in the actual war-zones, and there was an absence of diplomatic and commercial relations between the British Government and the Spanish Nationalists who rapidly captured the control *de facto* over more than half the total area of Spanish continental and overseas territory, including such important theatres of British economic enterprise as the site of the Rio Tinto mines and the vineyards of Xerez, which both lay in that portion of Andalusia which the Nationalists occupied in the early days of the war. As the war proceeded on the whole in favour of the Spanish Nationalists and their Italian and German allies, the proportion of the British economic interests in Spain that was in the Nationalists' power rose *pari passu*. The greatest single change in this respect was the transfer, from Spanish Republican to Spanish Nationalist hands, of the sources of British supplies of Spanish iron ore in consequence of the conquest of the Three Basque Provinces and Asturias by the composite forces at General Franco's disposal in the summer of 1937. In spite, however, of these and subsequent displacements of the military front in the Nationalists' favour, the bulk of the British investments in Spain appear to have still lain, even twelve months later than the last-mentioned date, in territory over which the legitimate Government of the Republic had not yet lost control.

The diplomatic difficulty was accentuated by the fact that, at the moment when war broke out in Spain, Anglo-Spanish trade was being carried on under a Payments (Clearing) Agreement that had been concluded between the two Governments on the 6th January, 1936. On the 17th December, 1936, in the House of Commons at Westminster, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Trade, Dr. Burgin, announced, in answer to a parliamentary question, that the clearing procedure instituted under this agreement had ceased to work satisfactorily and had placed serious obstacles in the way of

tered in Canada, which had a capital of about £20,000,000. Other important lines of British investment in Spain lay in railways, railway construction, and textiles. Messrs. J. & P. Coats had four or five factories in Spain, and Courtaulds also had interests there. The fear of losing investors' income, either temporarily or permanently, seems to have been at least as strong a motive in British minds as the fear of losing manufacturers' markets and sources of supply.

Anglo-Spanish trade ; and that it had accordingly been agreed between His Majesty's Government and the Spanish Government that the clearing procedure should be suspended.¹ Dr. Burgin added that it had been agreed in principle with the Spanish Government that the bulk of the sterling obtained from the export of all Spanish goods to the United Kingdom was to be used for the purchase of United Kingdom goods and that the necessary arrangements would be made by the Spanish Government in concert with His Majesty's Government. The Spanish Government, however, had no longer any say in the conditions under which British trade was to be conducted with the Spanish territory in Nationalist hands ; and, as far as this ever expanding area was concerned, General Franco's German and Italian backers had a policy of their own which General Franco proceeded to put into effect.

For states which, like Germany and Italy, had committed themselves to an, as far as possible, closed system of national economy, it was a matter of the utmost importance to arrange, if they could, that the imports with which they were unable to dispense should be paid for by being bartered for commodities which it was convenient for the 'totalitarian' states themselves to export. Not long since, Germany's economic Drang nach Südosten, which had been launched by Dr. Schacht, had been perceptibly slowed down owing to Germany's failure to pay her customers in goods which they wanted in return for those goods of theirs which Germany had wanted and had induced them to supply to her on credit.² The South-East European peasants could not feed and clothe themselves with the war materials which Germany would have liked to pay for their products, and the South-East European Governments, for their part, had no urgent need of these either, so long as they remained at peace. General Franco, however, was at war ; and the guns which Germany and Italy were able and eager to supply were, for him, a much more vital necessity than either butter or Manchester goods. Seeing that the Spanish products which had hitherto been exported from the territories in the Spanish Nationalists' hands to Great Britain happened to be commodities for which Germany and Italy also had an

¹ Subsequent negotiations for a trade agreement between Great Britain and Republican Spain came to nothing. On the other hand, parallel negotiations between France and Republican Spain resulted in the conclusion of an agreement on the 15th January, 1937. This Franco-Spanish agreement provided that fifteen per cent. of the proceeds of Spanish exports to France should be ear-marked for paying off old debts.

² See the *Survey for 1936*, Part III, section (iv) (d), the *Survey for 1937*, vol. i, Part IV, section (vi).

appetite, it will be seen that there was a golden opportunity for barter between the Nationalist part of Spain on the one hand and the two 'Axis' countries on the other.

During the early months of the war, while the Anglo-Spanish Clearing Agreement was still in operation, the Germans had tried to take advantage of the paralysis of trade between Great Britain and the Nationalists' territory in order to divert the Andalusian orange export from Great Britain to Germany.¹ By the beginning of the year 1937 General Franco had put into operation a system of compelling British and French mining companies² in the territory under his control either to hand over to him their output of ore (which he then consigned to Germany and Italy in payment for the war materials with which they were supplying him), or alternatively, if the companies preferred to export their output to a destination of their own choice, the General compelled them to deposit with him the full value of these exports in sterling or francs. On either alternative, General Franco settled with the British and French companies by paying them up to eighty per cent. of the value in pesetas, and compelling them to give him credit for the remaining twenty per cent. The General's pesetas were reckoned for this purpose at a rate of exchange, arbitrarily fixed by himself, which valued his paper at almost double the market rate; and when the companies had acquired these costly pesetas, they did not know how to dispose of them.³

On the 11th February, 1937, in the House of Lords at Westminster, it was announced on the Government's behalf, by Lord Templemore, that the authorities at Burgos had undertaken that the greater part of the sterling obtained from the export of goods to the United Kingdom should be spent on the purchase of goods produced or manufactured in that country. It was necessary, said Lord

¹ See *The Daily Telegraph*, 24th December, 1936.

² The French capital investments in Spain, which were considerable, were not confined to the mining industry. French money was also invested in glass, and in railways, tramways and other public utilities.

³ If the foreign companies concerned refrained from making any vociferous complaint, this was no doubt partly for fear that worse still might befall them at the Nationalists' hands if they made themselves disagreeable to General Franco's régime, and partly in the belief that, if they were to pass out of the Nationalists' into the Government's power, they might escape a confiscation that was at any rate unavowed and incomplete, in order to become the victims of a confiscation that would be totalitarian and irretrievable because it would be carried out on principle and not merely under the urgent practical necessity of finding the sinews of war. As a matter of fact, the Spanish Government were punctual in making all interest payments on the Spanish national debt, but as the foreign holdings appear to have been small, this demonstration of virtue had little moral effect abroad.

Templemore, to obtain these assurances in order that trade with the territory under General Franco's control might be maintained on a satisfactory basis. But when pressed on the point by his questioner, Lord Marley,¹ Lord Templemore confessed that the Government had no actual guarantee, and that the assurances obtained from the Nationalist authorities were unofficial in character. On the 9th March, 1937, it was announced in the British Press that the Commercial Secretary to the British Embassy at Hendaye, accompanied by an official of the Board of Trade in Whitehall, had arrived at Burgos for informal discussions on trade arrangements, and that they were also to visit Salamanca.

In June 1937 the progress of the Spanish Nationalists' offensive against the Basque country aroused anxiety in Great Britain regarding the maintenance of the British imports of iron ore from Bilbao² which had been continuing, though at a reduced volume, under the régime of the autonomous Basque Government, in spite of the material difficulties created by a *de facto* state of war. On the 15th June, 1937, in the House of Commons at Westminster, the President of the Board of Trade, in reply to Sir H. Seely, said that there had been some diversion to Germany and Italy of part of the minerals produced by the mines in the territory controlled by General Franco; that such difficulties as at present existed were being examined in relation to informal assurances received from General Franco's administration to the effect that there would be no interference with supplies of minerals to the United Kingdom; and that no substantial complaint had been received regarding supplies of iron ore from territories controlled by the Basque Government. Mr. Oliver Stanley repeated this statement on the 22nd June in reply to a question from Sir Percy Harris. In the same place on the 30th June Mr. Eden said that no restrictions had been imposed by General Franco and the Nationalist forces on British nationals and British commercial and industrial interests in the Basque area. He added that a British consular representative was on his way to Bilbao (which had fallen into General Franco's hands on the 19th June). On the 9th July, 1937, it was reported from Cardiff³ that since the occupation of Bilbao by the Nationalists only 1,000 tons of Spanish iron ore had arrived in South Wales, as compared with a previous average monthly import of 50,000 tons, and that the shortage of Spanish ore was being made

¹ In the same House on the preceding day, the 10th February, 1937, Lord Templemore had told Lord Marley that he had no information of any undertaking given by General Franco to the British Government.

² For the importance of the export of North Spanish iron ore see pp. 132-3, above.

³ In *The Financial News* of the 10th July, 1937.

good with supplies from Norway. On the 11th July, 1937, General Queipo de Llano, broadcasting from Seville, declared that the Nationalists could not guarantee the mining property of nationals of states that were unwilling to give General Franco's Government diplomatic recognition. On the 23rd July it was reported in the British Press that iron exports from Bilbao to Great Britain had been suspended owing to transport difficulties in what had lately been a war zone. General Franco was understood to have given assurances that the export of the ore to Great Britain in the usual quantities would be resumed as soon as normal conditions had been restored. On the 29th July, however, an official statement from Salamanca bore out the threat which General Queipo de Llano had broadcast from Seville earlier in the month.

It appears that iron ore will be exported to the normal markets—namely, England, Holland, and Germany . . . provided no overriding motives of a political or external economic order oblige us to resort to special measures

On the 27th August there was landed at Cardiff the first cargo of iron ore to arrive from Bilbao since its fall. The improvement, however, did not go far enough to save the British Government from being raked by another broadside of questions in the House of Commons on the 21st October, 1937. On this occasion, Mr. Stanley said that any scarcity of supplies of iron ore from Spain was largely due to damage arising from military operations and lack of labour, and he evaded questions regarding the alleged diversion of shipments of ore to Germany and the denunciation or suspension of contracts with important British firms.

These curtailments—not from British choice—of valuable British imports of Spanish commodities had their counterpart in a diminution of exports from Great Britain to Spain, as shown in a circular that was published by the British Chamber of Commerce for Spain at the beginning of September 1937. This document set out synoptically the figures, taken from the Board of Trade accounts, for British trade with Spain in the first half of each of the three years 1937, 1936, and 1935. The total value of British exports to Spain fell from £3,454,474 in the first six months of 1935 to £2,750,815 in the first half of 1936 and to £1,184,154 in the first half of 1937. The corresponding figures for British exports of machinery to Spain were £206,618, £251,258, and £26,848; for motor-cars, locomotives, ships, and aircraft they were £334,177, £326,934, and £17,075. The last of these sets of figures must have been as gratifying to the Foreign Office as it was mortifying for the Board of Trade; for it conclusively

proved the truth of the British Government's claim that they were scrupulously fulfilling their undertakings under the Non-Intervention Agreement. The golden, or rather ferrous, harvest of war profits from the Spanish war was being reaped, not in Great Britain, but in Germany, Italy and the Soviet Union.

These inroads on British trade with the expanding area in Spain that was in the hands of General Franco and his foreign allies impelled the British Government to explore the possibility of entering into *de facto* consular relations with the régime at Burgos. This move in Downing Street was welcome to the Spanish Nationalists on both an economic and a political ground. Economically, the residue of trade with Great Britain that it was open to them to maintain, after providing for the indispensable barter of British and French-owned Spanish ores against German and Italian troops and munitions, was of value to the Spanish Nationalists because it provided them with foreign exchange; and this was one of the sinews of war which could not be provided by their commercial relations with their 'totalitarian' allies. Politically, again, the Spanish Nationalists were eager to enter into regular relations with the British Government because this would look like a step towards diplomatic recognition, however carefully the British Government might label such relations as 'informal' or '*ad hoc*' or '*de facto*'. This difficulty of taking a commercially desirable step without committing themselves to awkward political implications set the British Government a delicate diplomatic problem; and conversations between the British Embassy at Hendaye and representatives of General Franco's régime were carried on for some time before agreement was reached.

In the House of Commons at Westminster on the 4th November, 1937, Mr. Attlee asked the Prime Minister whether the Government had decided to accord a *de facto* recognition to the Spanish Nationalists; if so, when this decision was reached; what precisely a *de facto* recognition signified; whether the decision was reached in consultation with other Governments, or had been made solely by the British Government; and what steps were being taken to give effect to it. Mr. Chamberlain replied:

There is no intention on the part of His Majesty's Government to make any variation in the attitude which they have consistently adopted towards the contending parties and which is governed by the international agreement for non-intervention to which they have subscribed. They are, however, bound to take account of their responsibility for the protection of British nationals and British commercial interests throughout the whole of Spain, including those large areas in the north, west and south-west parts of the country, as well as the Spanish Zone of

Morocco, of which General Franco's forces are now in effective occupation. It has become increasingly evident that the numerous questions affecting British interests in these areas cannot be satisfactorily dealt with by means of the occasional contacts which have hitherto existed. Accordingly, His Majesty's Government have entered upon negotiations for the appointment of agents by them and by General Franco respectively for the discussion of questions affecting British nationals and commercial interests, but these agents will not be given any diplomatic status. This matter is not one which required consultation with other nations, but His Majesty's Government have kept the French Government fully informed.

In the same place on the 8th November the considerations that had moved the Government were set out more fully by Mr. Eden, in the course of an inconclusive debate on the subject. Mr. Eden informed the House that the arrangement was to be concluded upon a basis of strict reciprocity; that the agents of the Spanish Nationalist régime in British territory and the British agents in the Spanish territory occupied by the Nationalists, though they would not enjoy diplomatic status, were to be allowed to exercise all the normal functions of consuls in relation to matters of commerce and navigation; that the reception of a Spanish Nationalist agent in London would 'not in any way constitute recognition by His Majesty's Government of the authorities of the territories under the control of General Franco'; and that, before giving final approval to the proposal, His Majesty's Government had insisted on obtaining the release of seven British ships until lately detained at Ferrol or elsewhere, and of two cargoes of British-owned iron ore which had been confiscated during the preceding summer.

The Spanish Nationalist régime appointed the Duke of Alba and Berwick to be their chief agent in London, and the British Government Sir Robert Hodgson to be their chief agent at Salamanca. Both representatives took up their duties in the course of December 1937.

(e) THE INTERESTS AND MOTIVES OF ITALY

When we pass from the two 'democratic' to the three 'totalitarian' Powers on the map of the Europe of 1936-7, our survey of interest and motives becomes in one sense simpler. Instead of having to take account of *tot sententiae quot homines*, we can now listen to the single voice of a Dictator or his *alter ego*, the Minister for Propaganda. Instead of having to write, in the plural, of 'the French' and 'the English' in their almost infinite variety, we can write in the singular of Italy and Germany and the Soviet Union in recording the history of years in which, in each of these three countries, a single will chose,

and imposed, a single policy. At the same time, we must beware of over-simplification, for an Opposition that has been silenced—and especially one that has been silenced by force—has not necessarily been conjured out of existence. It may have been, not annihilated, but merely driven underground; and a political force may be both inaudible and invisible without being altogether impotent. The *forte* of the Dictators of this age was a masterly combination of force with demagogery, and their method of government was to reduce the Opposition to a minimum by the exercise of their gift for spell-binding before bringing down their bludgeons on the heads of an irreducible remnant of irreconcilables. All the time these Dictators had their ears to the ground; and they would sometimes apprehend, and take steps to appease, a tremor of discontent which had never dared to show itself in public. In fact, the policies of the Dictators, as well as those of the parliamentary 'democratic' Governments, were to some extent the expression, not of a single dominant will, but of a resolution of a multiplicity of political forces whose existence and operation could be inferred from an analysis of the Dictator's policy. In one of the three 'totalitarian' countries in question, namely Germany, the underground conflict of feeling over the question of intervention in the Spanish war became so active at one stage that the Opposition's voice could actually be heard for a time as a distinctly audible murmur.¹

In surveying the interests and motives of Italy, Germany and the Soviet Union in the Spanish affair it will be convenient to take these three Powers in this order, which is the descending order of their relative degree of concern. Italy was touched by Spain less closely than France but more closely than Great Britain; for Germany the Spanish affair was a windfall; for Russia it was a luxury.

Italy's motives in intervening in the Spanish war were partly defensive and partly offensive—though it is not easy to draw this distinction in practice, since the Popular Front Government in Spain were naturally unable to agree with Signor Mussolini's no doubt sincere conviction that, in 'putting on the spot' a 'Red' Government in the Iberian Peninsula, he was simply acting in defence of his own Fascist régime in the Italian Peninsula. Nor would Signor Mussolini have been willing to admit in public the aggressive character of other motives of his which he can hardly have held to be defensive *bona fide*.

Fascist Italy seems to have been genuinely alarmed at the prospect of seeing a Communist or philo-Communist régime establish itself in Spain as a whole or even in some fraction of Spain with a sea-board

¹ See p. 191, below.

on the Mediterranean, such as, for example, Catalonia. Signor Mussolini appears to have dreaded this contingency on grounds that were both domestic and international. Considering the strength of the social currents that circulated between the Latin ports on the Mediterranean, in spite of the diversity of their national flags,¹ a successful proletarian revolution in Barcelona and Valencia might have repercussions in Genoa and in Naples. And considering the friendliness of Turkey towards the Soviet Union, and her suspicion of Italy, it was not inconceivable that if a 'Red' Republic came into being at the western end of the Mediterranean, the Soviet Union might succeed in securing a maritime right of way through Turkish territorial waters for establishing permanent contact with a Spanish sister of the same, or a similar, 'ideological' complexion as Moscow's, with the possible result that Fascist Italy might find herself 'encircled' by a Communist ring round the shores of Italy's 'own' sea.

These considerations were set out vigorously by Signor Gayda in the *Giornale d'Italia* of the 20th November, 1936:

It must be said very clearly, and without any useless turns of phrase, that Italy is not prepared to see planted in the Mediterranean, on Spanish soil, a new centre of the Red Revolution, a new base of Communist political and military operations. If some Great Power has had it in mind to open at Montreux the doors of the Mediterranean to Soviet warships laden with arms and explosives for the use of the world revolution,² Italy, a Mediterranean country, and other strong and decided nations of Europe are determined to set a close watch and to prevent that grave error from becoming the starting-point of the absolutely irreparable destruction of European order. In undertaking this task the anti-Communist defence of Italy and Germany in Europe, as also that of Japan in Asia, will not be merely passive but will assume such forms of reaction, though not offensive forms, as may be imposed by the aggressive initiative of the Soviets and of their Communist Committees.

The same preoccupation governed the Italian interpretation of the Anglo-Italian Declaration of the 2nd January, 1937, regarding the Mediterranean.³ In the *Giornale d'Italia* of the 6th January, 1937, Signor Gayda asserted that the Anglo-Italian Declaration had no bearing on the question of the flow of foreign volunteers to the Spanish war; and this thesis was officially interpreted, before the end of the same month, by the Fascist publicist's principal, Signor Mussolini himself, in an interview with a representative of the Nazi *Völkischer Beobachter*.⁴ To his German interlocutor's question

¹ See also p. 133, above.

² The Montreux Conference regarding the régime of the Black Sea Straits has been dealt with in the *Survey for 1936*, Part IV, section (i).

³ See the *Survey for 1936*, p. 658.

⁴ See *op. cit.*, p. 659.

whether the establishment of a Soviet Republic in Spain or in any part of Spain, for instance in Catalonia, would constitute a danger to the *status quo* in the Mediterranean, Signor Mussolini replied emphatically in the affirmative. Again, in the last week of May 1937, he declared to a representative of the Howard-Scripps group of American newspapers that

Italy is firmly opposed to Bolshevism establishing itself in Spain or the Mediterranean, because Bolshevism is always the greatest menace to Europe.

In embarking on his offensive-defensive policy in Spain, Signor Mussolini was also, no doubt, moved in part by motives of a purely aggressive character.

For instance, at the time when the war in Spain began, Signor Mussolini's own war in Africa had already outlived its, in Italian eyes, glamorous first phase. Marshal Badoglio's triumphal entry into Addis Ababa on the 5th May, 1936, was by this time some two and a half months old; and Signor Mussolini must have been well aware that the African venture had now entered upon a second chapter which was likely to be unromantic, arduous, and long-drawn-out. Meanwhile, the Eldorado which he had promised to his Italian peasants, merchants and *entrepreneurs* as the fruit of a quick and cheaply bought military victory was not in sight; and, *en attendant*, the political showman must divert his audience's attention to some more inspiring spectacle, and must find alternative military employment for a Fascist militia which was suited neither by temperament nor by training for employment on cleaning-up operations in Ethiopia in which there would be more danger and less exhilaration than in the first act of the African play. Thus in the summer of 1936 intervention in Spain was a move which suited the Italian Dictator's book; and while he might have hesitated to commit himself if he could have foreseen the strength of the resistance which his troops were to encounter in Spain and the degree of the effort which he would have to make in order to carry the enterprise through, a Dictator's sensitiveness on the point of prestige forbade him to draw back when once he had publicly committed himself.

Signor Mussolini's prestige might be said to have been at stake in Spain from the moment when, on the 18th November, 1936, he recognized General Franco's administration as the Government of the country;¹ but it was not until some weeks later that Italy's participation in the Spanish war was openly admitted and indeed proclaimed. The occasion was the capture of Málaga by the Nationalists

¹ See p. 256, below.

from the Republican forces on the 8th February, 1937.¹ On the 12th February, 1937, the following passage appeared in the columns of a Cremonese newspaper which was owned and edited by Signor Farinacci, a member of the Fascist Grand Council who had been General Secretary of the Fascist Party up to 1926.

Our youth . . . merely waited for things to take a serious turn in order to gather in Spain in compact legions, overthrow the enemies of civilization and deliver the death blow to the international gang that hoped to find in Caballero its champion and redeemer. And now foreign newspapers say that the victory of Málaga is an Italian victory. It is said that in these last times adventurous young men have left from every Italian city, eluding the Government's vigilance, to offer their faith, their enthusiasm and their indomitable courage to General Franco. We have no means of checking the accuracy of these statements, but if they are true we can only declare ourselves satisfied and proud

This publicity was premature, for the dubiously Italian military success of the 8th February, 1937, at Málaga² was followed on the 13th–18th March by an unquestionably Italian military disaster at Guadalajara³ which the Western Press made haste to compare with Caporetto and Adowa. These journalistic bullets found their billets, as was shown by the temper which Count Grandi displayed on the Non-Intervention Committee⁴ and Signor Mussolini in his public utterances. It was not till nearly three months later, when the *moral* of the Italian troops in Spain had been at least partially restored by successes in a campaign against the Basques,⁵ that the news of Guadalajara was officially broken to the Italian public in an article, printed in the *Popolo d'Italia* of the 17th June, 1937, which was credibly attributed to the Duce's pen. Thereafter, as it became more and more clearly apparent that Italy and Germany could break the Non-Intervention Agreement with impunity as far as the British and French Governments were concerned, Signor Mussolini showed his hand in Spain with less and less pretence of concealment. On the 21st June, 1937, he published the text of a congratulatory telegram which he had sent to General Franco *à propos* of his capture of Bilbao. An article, attributed to Signor Mussolini, which was printed in the *Popolo d'Italia* of the 26th June, 1937, proclaimed that

In this great fight, which has brought face to face two types of civilization, Italy has not been neutral but has fought, and victory will also be hers.

¹ See p. 64, above.

² It was true that an Italian battalion was the first unit of the anti-Government forces to enter the city of Málaga after the battle was over, but the battle itself seems to have been won for General Franco by Spanish infantry (see also p. 64, above).

⁴ See p. 299, below.

⁵ See pp. 67 *seqq.*, above.

In another article, printed in the same paper on the 1st July, the arrival of Italian volunteers on the Nationalists' side was admitted and belauded, while Great Britain and France were declared to have intervened as well, and were castigated by the Italian publicist on account of the very conduct for which he was praising his own countrymen. The writer concluded by declaring that the Italian volunteers had not been sent to Spain by the Italian Government; that only General Franco could discharge them; and that the Italian Government neither could nor would recall them. On the 27th August, 1937, Signor Mussolini and General Franco exchanged congratulatory telegrams over the capture of Santander. On the same day the Roman Press published the names of twelve Italian Generals then serving with General Franco's forces, as well as a casualty list, covering the period 14th-23rd August, 1937, of 16 Italian officers and 325 men killed, and 60 officers and 1,616 men wounded, in Spain. In this fashion Signor Mussolini ostentatiously dropped the mask.

In addition to the fear of Communist infection and the desire for military prestige, there were strategic motives for Italian intervention in Spain, and this *vis-à-vis* each of Italy's two rivals in the Mediterranean: on the one hand Great Britain and on the other hand France.

Whether or not Signor Mussolini seriously aspired to re-establish the Roman Empire up to approximately its ancient limits, he unquestionably did intend that for modern Italy, as for ancient Rome, the Mediterranean Sea should be veritably *mare nostro*, and in his naval ambitions he went further than Augustus or Trajan. The ancient Romans had been content to hold an undisputed naval command over the Mediterranean without making much effort to turn their empire into an oceanic naval Power. Between their day, however, and Mussolini's, the world of which Italy was a part had expanded from the narrow bounds of the Mediterranean Basin until it had come to embrace all the habitable lands and navigable seas on the face of the planet; and Signor Mussolini was determined to exalt Italy into a World-Power on this planetary scale. In embracing this ambition he was setting himself a two-fold task. On the one hand he must wrest from Great Britain and France the naval superiority which each of these Powers individually possessed over Italy in Mediterranean waters; on the other hand he must secure a command over the narrow waterways through which the almost land-locked 'Italian Sea' communicated at its western extremity with the Atlantic and at its south-eastern extremity with the Indian Ocean.

As between Italy and France, these two Italian tasks had no bearing on one another; for France did not command any of the exits

from the Mediterranean, while she did possess a Mediterranean seaboard of her own which assured her an access to Mediterranean waters, whatever Power might command the Straits of Gibraltar and Bābu'l-Mandab and the Suez Canal. As between Italy and Great Britain, on the contrary, the two Italian problems of securing command over the Mediterranean and securing command over its entrances were bound up with one another ; for Great Britain did command these entrances while she did not possess any Mediterranean seaboard of her own. In these circumstances Signor Mussolini might calculate that, even if he had no prospect of outmatching the British Mediterranean fleet on the high seas, he might still be able to force the British Navy to evacuate the Mediterranean by prising out of British hands the command of the narrow waterways on which the British Navy depended for its access to Mediterranean waters. These tactics were promising because there was a possibility of establishing an Italian command over the narrows without directly touching any of those British fortresses and naval bases by means of which the present British command over the narrows was maintained.

For example, in conquering Abyssinia and thereby forging the hitherto missing territorial link between Italy's colony of Eritrea, with its coastline on the Red Sea, and her colony of Somaliland, with its coastline on the Indian Ocean, Signor Mussolini had taken a long step towards securing the command over the Straits of Bābu'l-Mandab, notwithstanding Great Britain's possession of Aden and Perim Island. Even, however, if Aden were to be successfully masked and sterilized by Italian expansion in East Africa, the whole of Italy's Ethiopian Empire would still be held in fee from the British Empire so long as the British Navy commanded the Suez Canal. But, in order to command the Suez Canal, the British Navy must first command access to the Mediterranean through the Straits of Gibraltar. If, therefore, Italy could only secure a transference of the command of the Straits of Gibraltar from Great Britain's hands to her own, she might hope to wrest from Great Britain, by the same stroke, the command of the Mediterranean and of its south-eastward exit into the Indian Ocean. At present the Straits of Gibraltar were commanded by Great Britain, thanks to the combined effect of three factors. The first factor was Great Britain's command of the sea ; the second was her possession of Gibraltar ; the third was the fact (which was a necessary condition of Great Britain's possession of Gibraltar) that Spain, who possessed all the rest of the coastline of the Straits of Gibraltar, and this on the African as well as on the European side, was both a weak country and a neutral one. If Spain were to become

strong again through becoming Italy's junior partner, then the strategic situation in the Straits of Gibraltar which had obtained since the time of the War of the Spanish Succession would be profoundly altered to Great Britain's disadvantage without any legitimate ground being given for British interference or even expostulation. Supposing that the Spanish Nationalists were to make themselves masters of Spain thanks in large measure to Italy's diplomatic and military support, it would be fully within the sovereign rights of a victorious and self-confident Nationalist Spain to fortify and arm, as heavily as she chose, not only all the European coastline of the Straits, on either flank of Gibraltar, but also the four Spanish *presidios*, on, or off, the African shore, which were ancient possessions of Spain and which were expressly exempted from the treaty-servitudes¹ which forbade the fortification of the Spanish Zone of Morocco. If a Nationalist Spain were to exercise her own sovereign rights in this way, and were at the same time to show her gratitude to Italy for having been her friend in need by giving Italy military and naval 'facilities' on Spanish soil and in Spanish territorial waters, without any cession, or even lease, of Spanish territory, what, in such circumstances, could Great Britain do or even say?

It will be seen that, as between Italy and Great Britain, Signor Mussolini's policy of intervention in Spain on the Nationalists' side was fraught with possibilities of a decisive change in the naval balance of power, to Italy's advantage, throughout the chain of land-locked seas that stretched eastward and south-eastward from the Straits of Gibraltar to the Straits of Bābu'l-Mandab. The same Italian policy was also fraught with further possibilities of a decisive change in Italy's favour as against France.

The principal motive of the French in their persistent refusal to agree to the demand for Franco-Italian naval parity, which the Italians had been pressing ever since the close of the General War of 1914-18,² was a French determination to retain command over the sea-routes between the French ports on the European and the French ports on the African side of the Mediterranean, in order to keep open, for the French General Staff, the possibility of assembling both the metropolitan and the African French Army on either continent at will. If Italy could gain the power to prevent the fulfilment

¹ See the *Survey for 1925*, vol. i, p. 99 and n.

² See the *Survey for 1927*, Part II B and Part II C, section (i); the *Survey for 1928*, Part II, section (i) (a); the *Survey for 1929*, pp. 11-12, 13-14, 444, 481, 483; the *Survey for 1930*, pp. 18 seqq., and Part I, section (ii); the *Survey for 1931*, Part II, section (iv); the *Survey for 1932*, pp. 202, 221-2, 225, 241, 291, 292; the *Survey for 1935*, vol. i, pp. 100, 116, 190.

of this fundamental postulate of French strategy, she would be gaining the power virtually to halve the military strength of France on land. On this showing, it would be a major objective of Italian policy to deprive France of the command of this north-and-south maritime route across West-Mediterranean waters. Considering the disparity between French and Italian financial and industrial power, Italy had little prospect of being able, at any date that could be forecast, to secure her object here by catching up with, not to speak of outstripping, France in a naval building race. A disparity of naval power, however, might be more than outweighed by some radical change in the disposition and command of naval bases; and a change of the necessary dimensions in Italy's favour was in prospect if, as part of her reward for carrying the Spanish Nationalists' cause to victory, Italy were to receive from her grateful Spanish Nationalist clients permanent naval and aerial 'facilities' on the Balearic Islands, an insular possession of Spain which lay full in the fairway between Marseilles and Algiers.

At an early stage of the Spanish war the Italians intervened effectively in the Nationalists' favour in Majorca (which, as its name proclaimed, was the largest island in the Balearic group). The defeat of the Catalan expeditionary force in Majorca in August 1936¹ was reported to have been largely the work of the Italian Air Force. The numerical strength of the Italian forces in Majorca, then and thereafter, and the extent of the Italian political control over the government of the island, were perhaps exaggerated by the magnifying lens of French anxiety. At the same time it is probable that Majorca was one of the bases of the 'piratical' submarine campaign in the Mediterranean in August 1937,² and certain that it was the base from which Italian and German aeroplanes carried out the terrible air-raids on Barcelona on the 16th–18th March, 1938. From the naval point of view, however, Majorca was not so important as Minorca, which was the north-easternmost island of the three, and which contained, in Port Mahon, the only first-class naval harbour in the whole group. At the time of writing in the spring of 1938 the Italians had not yet extended their footing in the Balearic Islands from Majorca to Minorca. It remained to be seen what would happen in Minorca if and when the Spanish war ended in a complete victory for the Spanish Nationalists and their foreign allies.

(f) THE INTERESTS AND MOTIVES OF GERMANY

Germany, who was Italy's partner in the violation of the Non-Intervention Agreement in the Spanish Nationalists' favour, had

¹ See pp. 50–1, above.

² See pp. 340 *seqq.*, below.

interests and motives which corresponded with those of Italy in their nature, but not in their relative importance. Like Italy, Germany was concerned to combat 'Red Revolution' in Spain, and, like Italy again, she was interested in obtaining strategic 'facilities' in Spanish territory and territorial waters that would give Germany strategic advantages as against the two West-European democratic Powers. For Germany, however, both these interests were less vital than they were for Italy by reason of the greater remoteness of Spain from the German extremity of 'the Berlin-Rome Axis'. On the other hand, Germany, being a more highly developed industrial country than Italy, had a more lively interest in securing the economic command over Spanish raw materials and Spanish markets. There was also some ground for thinking that the technical services of the German armed forces made use of the Spanish war-zone as an operating theatre for vivisectional experiments in the practical application of the latest scientific discoveries for military purposes. The destruction from the air, on the 26th April, 1937,¹ of the historic town of Guernica in the Basque country, and again the ruthless aerial bombardment of Barcelona on the 16th-18th March, 1938, were not incredibly reported to have been German operations—performed perhaps without asking General Franco's leave—for the purpose, not so much of furthering the victory of the Spanish Nationalists, as of discovering by experiment whether the German air arm would be capable, by itself, of dealing a 'knock-out blow' to an enemy country.

It will be seen that Germany's 'scientific' interest, and even her economic interest, in intervening in the Spanish war were not of the same order of importance as either the strategic or the 'ideological' motive; and since, as has been already observed, the facts of geography made these two latter motives less lively in German minds than in Italian, it would follow that Germany's interest in intervening in Spain was less palpable than Italy's on the whole. On this showing, it is not surprising to find that an opposition to the policy of intervention which remained mute in Italy became audible in Germany—and this loud enough to produce a perceptible modification of the German Government's Spanish tactics.

On the 'ideological' issue, it can hardly be supposed that the prospect of a triumph of Communism or Anarcho-Syndicalism was dreaded in National-Socialist Germany—as it may genuinely have been dreaded in Fascist Italy²—for fear of direct repercussions on the intervening Power's home front. Herr Hitler's unwillingness to tolerate the establishment of a 'Red' Spain was not a political neces-

¹ See pp. 68-72, above.

² See pp. 178-80, above.

sity, but was rather a political luxury, for 'the Third Reich'. It was a particular application of the idea which had moved Herr Hitler to conclude 'the Anti-Comintern Pact'.¹ The essence of that instrument was its assertion of a right, and declaration of intention to exercise this alleged right, of 'putting on the spot' (in the American phrase) any régime in any country in the world which was of a 'Bolshevik' complexion in the opinion of the signatories.² In other words 'the Triangle Powers'—who had challenged the right of the states members of the League of Nations to take concerted action for restraining aggression on the part of any Power in any quarter of the world—were now advancing a claim of their own to put down, not aggression, but 'Bolshevism', wherever, in their sight, it might show its head. On German lips this was a re-assertion, in up-to-date language, of the claim to exercise world-power which had been first asserted by the Emperor William II after his dismissal of Bismarck. In Spain in 1936–7 Germany did exercise world-power for the first time since the Armistice of the 11th November, 1918; and the long intervening military and political eclipse of Germany made this Spanish demonstration particularly gratifying for the imperialistic-minded element in the National-Socialist Party and in the German nation at large.

After the outbreak of the war in Spain, the German Press lost little time in denouncing not only the Soviet Union, but also the Popular Front Government in France and the Labour Opposition in Great Britain, as the villains of this Spanish piece. For example, in organs of the German Press published on the 20th and 21st August, 1936, the Spanish catastrophe was declared to be the result of Russian machinations; the Soviet Union was alleged to be working for the expansion of a local Spanish civil war into a general world war; and Moscow's ultimate aim was asserted—as though Stalin had not beaten Trotsky³—to be world-conquest through world-revolution. The further progress of the war in Spain was accompanied in the German Press by a monotonous repetition of this choric chant, till in September 1937 the community singing was momentarily interrupted by some pieces of individual *recitative* at the Nuremberg Parleitag of that year. On the 9th September, 1937, Spain figured in the following passage of a speech at Nuremberg from the mouth of Dr. Goebbels:

It is here [in Spain] that the decision must be made between Bolshevism,

¹ See the *Survey for 1936*, pp. 384 seqq., 925 seqq.; the *Survey for 1937*, vol. 1, pp. 42–3. ² See the *Survey for 1937*, vol. i, pp. 37 seqq.

³ See the *Survey for 1927*, pp. 248–56; the *Survey for 1934*, pp. 361–5. See also the present volume, pp. 196–7, below.

that is to say destruction and anarchy, on the one side, and Authority, that is to say order and construction, on the other . . . What is happening in that unfortunate Spain to-day may happen to-morrow in any other country where the people have not enough judgment or sense of realities to recognize the danger that threatens them, and in consequence to create means and possibilities of meeting it effectively. Spain is now the plague spot where the disease has broken out. Here the symptoms of this dangerous infection are shown most clearly and plainly. Therefore a discussion of the Spanish question must include the revelation of the international ramifications of the World Revolution planned by the Bolsheviks, of which the events in Spain are only a part.

In this speech the German Minister for Propaganda repeated the unproven tale that General Franco's military revolt had merely forestalled a Communist uprising in Spain which was professedly known to have been timed to break out within the next few days; but Dr. Goebbels did not avow that Germany had been intervening in the Spanish war on the Nationalists' side. He did, however, take occasion to deny that Germany had any territorial designs in Spain or even any intention of trying to bring Spain under German influence by indoctrinating Spanish minds with the National-Socialist 'ideology', and he declared that Germany's attitude towards the conflict in Spain was strictly defensive.

At the same festival on the 13th September the same theme was enlarged upon, in less specifically Spanish and more familiarly general terms, by Herr Hitler.

This 'ideological' motive of combating Communism in any quarter of the world was reinforced in Nazi minds by a strategic motive for German intervention in Spain which arose out of Spain's particular geographical location. If, by taking advantage of the opportunity that was offered by the Spanish civil war, Germany were to succeed in gaining for herself a lasting military, naval and aerial *point d'appui* in the Iberian Peninsula, she might then be in a position to bring to bear against France the strategy of 'encirclement' which, for the past forty years, France herself had been bringing to bear against Germany in her pre-war and post-war relations with Russia and in her post-war relations with Poland and the states members of the Little Entente.¹ The nightmare of 'encirclement' had always weighed heavily on the Germans' own minds; and the prospect of being able at last to turn the tables on France thus had, for German eyes, the double attraction of appearing to be both a telling stroke of revenge and an effective piece of strategy. On the second of these two points, however, signs multiplied, as the war proceeded, of a sharp division

¹ See also p. 131, above.

of opinion in Germany between the Nazi politicians and the professional soldiers.

In any strategy of encirclement there is bound to be at least one technical weakness which is unavoidable because it is of the essence of the situation *Ex hypothesi*, the Power that is being encircled must lie between the Powers by whom the encircling movement is being carried out; and the natural *riposte* of the victim of the strategy is to take advantage of his interior lines in order to make it as difficult as he can for the encircling Powers to co-operate effectively with one another. Thus in the General War of 1914–18 the Central Powers did more or less effectively prevent British and French war materials from reaching Russia, and quite effectively prevent Russian manpower from being employed on the Western Front. Again, at the very time of the Spanish war that broke out in 1936, the alliances between France and her friends in Central and Eastern Europe were threatening to crumble away, even without having been put to the test of actual hostilities, owing to the palpable difficulties in the way of their ever joining hands round either of the two ends of 'the Berlin-Rome Axis'. If Germany were now to seek to escape from encirclement between France and France's East European allies by attempting to encircle France between a Nazi Germany and a Nationalist Spain, Germany might be parrying a danger that was perhaps less serious in reality than it was in appearance at the price of ceding to France a strategic advantage that was indubitable. In any Germano-Spanish military combination against France, the victim of encirclement would, as always, enjoy the advantage of holding the interior lines, whereas the military value of Germany's Spanish ally would be uncertain. It might be taken for granted that a Nationalist Spain, even if hostile to France, would not constitute a very serious menace to her unless the military power of Spain were vigorously and constantly supplemented by German and Italian reinforcements; but, even if Germany could count upon Italian military co-operation, neither Italy nor Germany could count on being able to retain access to Spain in case of war with France and Great Britain so long as the command of the sea remained in British and French hands. It was true that this command might be threatened, impaired, and perhaps ultimately even destroyed if, before the outbreak of war, the German and Italian Navies, Air Forces and Armies should have succeeded in installing themselves, thanks to the Spanish Nationalists' good will, in the Balearic Islands and on the two shores of the Straits of Gibraltar. Just on this account, however, there was an evident danger that France and Great Britain might decide to resist Italo-German

strategic encroachments in Spanish territory and territorial waters at some point before these encroachments had been carried far enough to counteract the effect of the initial Anglo-French superiority over 'the Berlin-Rome Axis' in sea-power. In fact, Herr Hitler's policy of intervention in Spain in 1936-7 involved a risk—as well as a possible reward—of the same nature and magnitude as the risk that attended his military reoccupation of the Rhineland on the 7th March, 1936,¹ and his occupation and annexation of Austria on the 11th-13th March, 1938. And in this case the Führer's professional military advisers appear to have felt, and expressed, the same misgivings as on the other two occasions in question.

In the third week of December 1936 there were rumours in the French and British Press that Generals von Blomberg and von Fritsch were opposing the demands of a radical wing of the German National-Socialist Party for an increase in the scale of German military intervention in Spain. In Paris on the 23rd December, 1936, the French Minister for Foreign Affairs, Monsieur Delbos, was reported to have told the German Ambassador, Count Welczek, that France would not tolerate German intervention in Spain on the grand scale. Immediately after Christmas Herr Hitler was reported to have held, at Berchtesgaden, an emergency council of his intimate personal advisers to consider a report from General Faupel, the German *chargé d'affaires* at General Franco's headquarters. General Faupel was said to have submitted that the foreign intervention on the Spanish Nationalists' behalf would not avail, on its present scale, to make the Nationalists win the war, and that it was therefore a choice for Germany of abandoning intervention or else very greatly extending its scope.² At the opening of the New Year, when Herr Hitler, Herr von Neurath and the senior officers of the Reichswehr all reassembled in Berlin from their respective Christmas holidays in order to attend the funeral of General von Seeckt, the conflict of views on the Spanish question between the military conservatives and the Nazi radicals was rumoured in the French and British Press to have produced another sharp clash of wills. Immediately after this there occurred the Franco-German incident, which is recorded elsewhere in this volume,³ over the alleged landing of German troops in the Spanish Zone of Morocco. In January 1937, in contrast to what had happened on the 7th March, 1936, and was to happen again on the 11th-13th March, 1938, the course of events justified the caution of the Reichswehr as against the audacity of the Nazis. The French Government

¹ See the *Survey for 1936*, Part III, section (i).

² See also p. 280, below.

³ See pp. 281-3, below.

made it clear that they did not intend to allow Germany to establish herself in Morocco, with the result that Herr Hitler saw the French Ambassador in Berlin, Monsieur François-Poncet, on the 11th January and 'spontaneously' declared to him that Germany had not, and never had had, any intention of infringing the integrity of Spain or Spanish possessions in any way. This step in Berlin was said to have been the outcome of a conference between Herr Hitler and the high officers of the Reichswehr at Berchtesgaden on the 9th January.

This diplomatic retreat on the German Government's part was covered by a furious verbal bombardment of France in the German Press; but that outburst expressed the feelings of the Nazi radicals rather than those of the general public. While the Nazis were chagrined at having had their bluff called by France in fulfilment of the forebodings of the Reichswehr, the general public in Germany were evidently relieved at a turn of events which promised to check the increase of German intervention in the Spanish war; and it may be conjectured that in refraining, as he now did, from pushing his intervention in Spain *à outrance* Herr Hitler was moved by the trend of German public feeling, to which he was always sensitive and usually responsive, more strongly than he was moved either by the representations of his professional military advisers or by French diplomatic warnings and naval demonstrations.

The truth was that, in sending German soldiers to risk their lives on Spanish battlefields, Herr Hitler was stepping outside the sphere of action in which he could be sure of commanding the spontaneous and unanimous support of the German people. Since the peace settlement of 1919–20 the German people had had two outstanding desires in the field of foreign affairs. They yearned to throw off the servitudes—financial, political, and military—of the Peace Treaty of Versailles; and they yearned to unite under the German flag all the German-speaking and German-feeling populations that had been arbitrarily excluded from the Versailles frontiers of the Reich in defiance of that very principle of self-determination which had been proclaimed in the peace settlement, by the victors, to be the natural right of every nation in Europe save the German nation only. In so far as the Nazi Führer was leading the German people towards the achievement of either or both of these aims, they were ready to follow him even to the death. But the twentieth-century Germans were hardly more willing than were their French or English contemporaries to give their lives for political purposes which they could not fully understand or could not be persuaded to regard as being of vital national importance. The test case of the Spanish war seemed to

prove that it was not much easier to induce Germans to fight on foreign soil for the purpose of encircling France than it would have been to induce Frenchmen to do the like for the purpose of encircling Germany; and that an anti-Communist crusade in deadly earnest, at the risk of life and limb, was not much more popular in Germany than an anti-Fascist Crusade on the same stark terms would have been in Great Britain.

Before the close of the calendar year 1936 'volunteers' of all arms, including infantry, were being drafted to Spain from the German Army.¹ These 'volunteers' appear to have been procured by a mixture of propaganda and pressure—the relative proportions of the two ingredients varying from garrison town to garrison town and from unit to unit. The whole procedure was draped in an elaborate cloak of secrecy; and parents who were informed of their sons' death in action—or in the more discreet formula of 'a fatal accident'—were told that they must not spread the news and must not go into mourning. This official secretiveness was presumably dictated by a fear of the repercussions of the news in Germany rather than in France or in Great Britain, since Herr Hitler was rightly more afraid of the German people's resentment at the imposition of a Nazi blood-tax than he was of the British and French Governments' annoyance at a German breach of the Non-Intervention Agreement. The secretiveness, however, cut both ways. If it guarded against an outbreak of public indignation in Germany, it also deprived the 'volunteers' and their parents of the usual consolation for death in battle. The 'volunteers' were required to lay down their lives without any meed of glory. And this was evidently too much to ask even of the dutiful German breed of human nature.

In any case, Herr Hitler did abandon—if he ever seriously entertained—the idea of sending to Spain a full-blown German army like the Italian army that was sent there by his confederate Signor Mussolini. The unpopular experiment of drafting German infantry to the Spanish front seems to have been abandoned altogether at an early date in the year 1937; and the German force in Spain was thenceforward substantially confined to technicians who, if they were anti-aircraft gun crews, would be working behind the lines where there was comparatively little danger, or who, if they were tank crews or airmen, were semi-professionals who might be persuaded to take it as all in the day's work if they were asked to risk their lives for the sake of testing the efficiency of their infernal machines. This great and notable concession, on Herr Hitler's part, to German public

¹ See pp. 268–9, below.

opinion did not, as it turned out, spell the frustration of Nazi ambitions in Spain; for the failure of the Nazi radicals to procure the despatch of German infantry to Spain in large numbers did not prevent the 'Fascist' Powers from inclining the scales more and more decidedly in favour of the Spanish Nationalists. The foreign infantry whom General Franco needed were duly supplied, in the quantities required, by Signor Mussolini; and from the political point of view Germany seems actually to have gained, in the Spanish Nationalists' good graces, thanks to the numerical inferiority of the German to the Italian contingent of General Franco's foreign troops. While the Italian infantry were numerous, self-assertive and of uncertain military value, the German military technicians were few, modest and unquestionably efficient. And at the time of writing in the spring of 1938 it looked as though, when the hour arrived for casting up the political accounts of the business of foreign military intervention in Spain, Germany might be found to have made a greater profit on a smaller outlay than her Italian partner.¹

By comparison with the difficulty of justifying, in the forum of German public opinion, the outpouring of German blood in Spain, it was child's-play for Herr Hitler to justify the expenditure of German treasure in financing a military intervention that was confined to technical services. It was not difficult to argue that the cost of such intervention in Spain could be reimbursed by payments in kind which might start a regular flow, from Spain to Germany, of certain raw materials of which Germany stood in particularly urgent need. In this quest of Spanish raw materials Germany had to reckon with the economic rivalry of her political and military partner, Italy; but she seems to have found little difficulty in getting the better of Italy in this field of competition, and particularly in the Italo-German race for the acquisition of Spanish ores. Before the end of 1936 semi-public Hispano-German trading companies had been organized at Seville and in Berlin for the purpose of forwarding Spanish ores to German foundries; and the diversion, to a German instead of a British or French destination, of supplies of Spanish ore which were the product and property of British and French mining companies, has been recorded in another context.² The conclusion of a commercial

¹ On the other hand, in the summer of 1938 there were reports that latterly the Italians in Spain had been winning Spanish sympathy by a display of real comradeship with their Spanish companions in arms, while the Catholic wing of the Spanish Nationalists were beginning, like the Portuguese Catholics (see p. 206, below), to feel misgivings in regard to the anti-religious vein in German National-Socialism.

² See pp. 173-5, above.

agreement between the Governments at Berlin and at Salamanca was announced in Berlin on the 19th July, 1937, and the text was made public on the 31st of the same month ; but this document threw little light on the ways and means of fulfilment of the hopes of profitable trade between a Nationalist Spain and a Nazi Germany. In the summer of 1938 there were reports that the Germans were arranging for the establishment, under their direction, of a network of textile factories in Andalusia.¹

(g) THE INTERESTS AND MOTIVES OF THE SOVIET UNION

In the Spanish war that broke out in 1936 the heaviest make-weight against the breach of the Non-Intervention Agreement by Italy and Germany was the breach of it by the Soviet Union ; but in this long-sustained competition in breaking faith it was the two 'Fascist' Powers who showed the greater staying-power. The Soviet Union laboured under two handicaps which were common to her and to Germany but which told against the Russian competitor more heavily than against her German rival ; and, in addition, she was subject to a third handicap which was common to her and to the two West-European 'democracies'.

The handicaps common to the Soviet Union and Germany were, both of them, effects of geographical distance. If Germany was remote from the Spanish theatre of war, Russia—lying, as she did, on the farther side of Germany—was remote *a fortiori* ; and therefore for Russia, as for Germany, but for Russia in a greater degree, military intervention in the Spanish war was both a political luxury and a strategic risk. It was a luxury because a victory for the Spanish Nationalists and their Italian and German allies in the Iberian Peninsula would involve no direct military or political danger to the Soviet Union's own national security, even if it did result in the attachment of a Nationalist Spain to 'the Berlin-Rome Axis'. In the first instance, it would affect Russian interests only indirectly, through its adverse effect on the interests of Russia's West-European ally France. And, in view of Stalin's apparent leaning towards a policy of isolation, it may be conjectured that the prospect of the extinction of 'Red' Spain was viewed by the Dictator at Moscow very much as the contemporary Prime Minister in Downing Street seems to have viewed

¹ Perhaps in the expectation that the combination of German enterprise and skill with Andalusian cheap labour might avail to capture the Peninsular market for textiles from the Catalans (compare the contemporary bid for the North American market that was being made by new factories in North Carolina against the old factories in New England).

the prospect of the extinction of Czechoslovakia. While both the Georgian and the Mercian statesman must have disliked such unpleasant prospects intensely, each of them may have consoled himself in some measure with the calculation (true or false) that, if the catastrophe did happen, it would be the funeral, not of his own country, but of another Great Power at the opposite extremity of Europe. This sheer effect of distance in diminishing an appetite for intervention must also have been heightened in Monsieur Stalin's mind, as in Mr. Chamberlain's, by the technical difficulty of bringing his country's military power into action in the particular arena that was in question. Just as the British were nonplussed by the technical problem of how they were to intervene effectively on Czechoslovakia's behalf in what would be, *ex hypothesi*, a land-war on the farther side of 'the Berlin-Rome Axis', so the Russians may be presumed to have been daunted to some extent by the difficulty of intervening on the Spanish Government's behalf in a theatre of war which was likewise on the farther side of 'the Berlin-Rome Axis' from the Russian standpoint, and which could only be reached from a Russian base of operations by running the gauntlet of 'the Axis Powers' at sea.

In order to send food supplies, war materials and technicians from Odessa or Leningrad to Valencia or Barcelona, the Soviet Government must despatch them on board ship either through the Mediterranean, where the maritime passage was commanded by Italy (unless either France or Great Britain or both the two West-European Powers were to throw their naval forces into the scales on the Soviet Union's side), or else through the Baltic, where the maritime passage was commanded by Germany (and this against all comers). It is true that in theory the naval risk involved in Russian intervention in Spain was also involved in German and Italian intervention there, since, while the Russians' maritime access to the Peninsula was commanded by the German and Italian Navies, it was equally true that the Germans' and Italians' maritime access to the Peninsula was commanded by the British and French Navies. In this matter of risk, however, there was a world of difference between theory and practice; for, in view of the tested and proven pacific-mindedness of the French and British Governments, the Italian and German Governments could, and did, discount the risk of Franco-British naval sanctions almost to vanishing point, and were justified by the event, which showed that they had broken the Non-Intervention Agreement with impunity. On the other hand, the practical risk which the Russians were running was much greater, since the adversaries with whom they had to reckon were not a 'democratic' Great

Britain and France but a 'totalitarian' Germany and Italy. For while there was good reason for believing that the 'Axis' Powers had no more stomach than the Soviet Union or the two West-European Powers had for a general war against opponents of their own calibre, it had been tested and proven that they were willing to sail much nearer the wind than the two Western Powers, at any rate, would be willing to follow them. Signor Mussolini's readiness to skirt the extreme limit of his margin of safety was illustrated afresh, and this mainly at the expense of Russian shipping, in the 'piratical' submarine campaign in the Mediterranean in the month of August 1937;¹ and although this particularly flagrant piece of foul play partly defeated itself by provoking the British and French Governments to take effective counter-measures at Nyon,² it also no doubt partly served the purpose of conveying to Moscow the impression that Italy might perhaps be willing to precipitate a general war rather than tolerate a Russian intervention in Spain on the Italian scale.

It will be seen that the considerations which deterred Germany from intervening on that scale must have weighed with the Soviet Union still more heavily; but perhaps the most serious handicap under which the Soviet Union laboured in its Spanish contest with the two 'Fascist' Powers was an unresolved conflict of aims which was worthy of a democracy and was strangely incongruous with the structure and the 'ideology' of a 'totalitarian' state.

As far as could be seen through the smoke-screen with which all the 'totalitarian' Powers were careful to envelop their machinations in foreign parts, Communist Russia, like National-Socialist Germany and Fascist Italy, had been busily fishing in the troubled waters of Spanish politics for some years before the outbreak of war in Spain on the 17th July, 1936. But during the period of this covert overture to the Spanish catastrophe the foreign policy of the Government at Moscow had been moving, as has been noted in previous volumes of this *Survey*,³ in exactly the opposite direction to the contemporary movement of the policy of its fellow 'totalitarian' Governments at Rome and Berlin. At a time when the 'Fascist' Powers had been transforming Fascism from a political commodity 'for internal consumption only' into a commodity 'for export' or 'for external application' (to pass from the economist's to the apothecary's vocabulary), Stalin had been substituting his own slogan of 'Socialism in One Country' for Trotsky's slogan of 'Permanent World Revolution'

¹ See pp. 340 *seqq.*, below.

² See pp. 347-50, below.

³ See the *Survey for 1934*, Part III B, section (i), and the *Survey for 1936*, pp. 8, 14 *seqq.*, 373-8.

as the watchword for the foreign policy of the Soviet Union. By the time when the Spanish war broke out, Stalin's victory over Trotsky was complete within the Union's own borders ; but it was not so easy for Stalin to liquidate the legacy of Trotskyism abroad ; and in Spain a now officially Stalinian Soviet Union found itself still committed to a Trotskyite foreign policy when the outbreak of war in the Peninsula overtook the Dictator at Moscow and threatened to force upon him an unwelcome choice between embarrassing alternatives.

Stalin was, in fact, now in danger of being presented in Spain with a choice of actively taking up the repudiated policy of his discomfited personal rival or else allowing it to become manifest to his own followers in the All-Union Communist Party—not to speak of the Stalinian Communist Church throughout the world—that Trotsky had been right, after all, in maintaining that 'Stalinism' was synonymous with 'betrayal'. This would become conspicuously apparent if Stalin were to suffer the military intervention of the 'Fascist' Powers in the Spanish war to pass unchallenged, since Spain after the elections of February 1936¹ offered the most promising field for Communist action that had presented itself anywhere since the crucial, and perhaps decisive, failure of Communism to take advantage of the golden opportunity for capturing Germany that had been offered to Lenin and his heirs by Poincaré when the 'die-hard' Lotharingian statesman had carried out his military occupation of the Ruhr.² While the failure of Communism to capture Germany even under this tribulation had demonstrated the tenacity, in Germany, of the modern Western bourgeois way of life, the eventual capture of Spain by Communism might seem to be foreshadowed by the social dissimilarity of Spain from the contemporary West³ and her social resemblance to contemporary Russia. In 'post-war' Spain, as in 'pre-war' Russia, there was a poverty-stricken and uneducated peasantry, a privileged and unpopular church, a parasitic and detested aristocracy, and an exotic and embittered industrial proletariat. If this combination of social ingredients had proved so violently explosive in Russia, it was not unreasonably optimistic for an apostle of the world-revolution to reckon upon like effects being within his power to elicit out of like causes in Spain ; and while he might have been able to reach his goal of world-revolution more quickly if he had succeeded in 1923 in blowing up the German powder

¹ The results of these elections opened up for Communism, for the first time, a prospect of being able to capture from Anarcho-Syndicalism the allegiance of the revolutionary-minded element in the Spanish proletariat.

² See the *Survey for 1924*, Part I C, section (ii) (f).

³ See pp. 2-3, above.

magazine in the heart of the European citadel of the Bourgeois Society, the next best recourse might be to ignite, in 1936, a train of gunpowder on the Spanish glacis of the European fortress, to match the train that was already burning so briskly on the Russian glacis at the opposite point of the compass, for between these two fires there was some likelihood that the whole intervening expanse of Europe might ultimately be caught in the conflagration. Such expectations had no doubt kept up the spirits and speeded the hands of those disciples of Trotsky who had been indefatigably labouring in the Spanish vineyard while their master had been succumbing to his more cunning adversary on the home front. If, in these circumstances, Stalin were to adopt an attitude of neutrality towards the conflict in Spain, he might have to face a complete collapse of the Third (Communist) International; and though an acceptance of this consequence might be a logical corollary of the Stalinian policy of 'Socialism in One Country', it would be hardly politic for the conqueror of Trotsky to allow this train of cause and effect to become conspicuous. It was a poetic justice that thus disturbed Stalin's triumph in the Kremlin by importunately condemning him to dispose of Trotsky's Spanish legacy.

The first reaction of Stalin's Soviet Union to the outbreak of an 'ideological' war in Spain was quite in Trotsky's manner. On the 3rd August, 1936, it was announced in Moscow that, in aid of the Spanish Popular Front in its struggle against the Nationalists, there was to be a levy at the rate of one half per cent. of one month's remuneration on the wages and salaries of employees in state factories and offices throughout the Union. At Moscow on the same date, after closing time, an officially organized demonstration over the Spanish issue was held in the Red Square. There were similar demonstrations all over the country next day. On the 5th August the levy was extended to the workers on the collective farms.¹ A 'Hands off Spain' pageant was staged in Moscow on the 24th August, 1936. On the 24th and 25th October, 1936, there were factory meetings in the principal industrial cities of the Union to support the stand which Monsieur Maisky was taking in London on the Non-Intervention Committee.² In the Soviet Union Press of the 20th November, 1936, Mr. Eden was taken to task for his remark, in the House of Commons at Westminster on the 19th, that, so far as non-intervention was

¹ Part of the money thus raised was sent to Spain in the form of cash and part was used to purchase foodstuffs and other essential supplies (see p. 384, below). A second nation-wide appeal for funds was reported to have been made before the end of September.

² See pp. 249-52, below.

concerned, he thought that there were other Governments more to blame than those of Germany and Italy.¹

In so far as any estimate of any value can be made with regard to the extent of an intervention in Spain which each of the intervening Powers was studiously screening from the light of publicity, it may be surmised that the British Secretary of State's assessment of the respective lengths to which different parties to the Non-Intervention Agreement were going in their breaches of it may have been not incorrect in respect of the particular time of which he was speaking, though it would not follow that Mr. Eden would have made the same estimate in dealing with either earlier or later chapters of the same story. While it might be difficult to determine whether Russian, German or Italian intrigue had been first in the Spanish field in the period preceding the outbreak of war in Spain on the 17th July, 1936, there appeared, at the time of writing, to be little doubt that, after hostilities had opened, the first acts of military intervention—in the sense of the despatch of arms, and of men to manipulate them—were committed by Italy and Germany. The military intervention of the Soviet Union in Spain seems to have been not only subsequent to this but also consequent upon it. When it became apparent that Italo-German military intervention was being perpetrated on a scale which might produce a rapid decision of the war in the Nationalists' favour, the Soviet Union followed suit, and there was perhaps then a stage at which Soviet intervention was greater in volume than either German or Italian;² but, on an estimate covering the whole period of the war, this Russian intervention would seem to have been less massive than that of the 'Fascist' Powers, and this both in kind and in quantity. There was no evidence that there was ever a Russian infantry force in Spain even on the modest scale of the German infantry force there. Like Germany (apart from that unpopular and brief experiment), the Soviet Union seems virtually to have confined its intervention in Spain to the despatch of technicians, who, in the Russian case, seem to have been mainly military instructors, airmen, artillery officers and staff officers.³ The aircraft and guns which these Russian technicians were required to operate seem for the most part to have been of Russian origin—at any rate during the early months of the war—and munitions of other kinds were also received in considerable quantities from the same source. During the autumn of 1937, however, there seems to have been a marked falling off in these Russian supplies—partly

¹ See pp. 250–1 *n.*, below.

² See p. 250, below.

³ See also p. 268, below.

perhaps owing to the high percentage of losses on ships and cargoes on the long voyage from Russian to Spanish ports,¹ and partly perhaps also owing to a new and more absorbing pre-occupation with a war in the Far East which, for the Soviet Union, was, unlike the war in Spain, a matter of direct and vital concern. Another factor which may have played its part was the paralysis with which the Soviet Union was stricken as a result of the great purge of 1937,² and particularly the weakening of Soviet military power through the execution of Marshal Tukhachevsky and his eminent fellow victims.³ In any case, whatever the cause or causes, by the end of the year 1937 there were indications—for example, an apparent change in the Soviet attitude on the Non-Intervention Committee, and a marked inclination of the balance of armaments in Spain in the Nationalists' favour—suggesting that by this time the Soviet Government may have almost abandoned the hope of either seeing a *bona fide* execution of the Non-Intervention Agreement or balancing breaches of it by other parties with countervailing breaches on their own part.

One of the most effective ways in which the Soviet Union helped the Popular Front in Spain was by sending foodstuffs for the sustenance of the population of industrial cities whose normal Peninsular sources of food supply had fallen into the Nationalists' hands. This import of foodstuffs into Spain was, of course, no breach of the Non-Intervention Agreement; and the Russian ships which brought cargoes of food through the Mediterranean to Valencia and Barcelona had their counterparts in British ships which brought similar cargoes to Bilbao.⁴

While Mussolini and Hitler thus drove Stalin into following in Trotsky's footsteps in Spain in the matter of military intervention, in the political sphere Stalin remained true to his own anti-Trotskyite policy in Spain as well as on his home front. During the Spanish war the representatives, both military and civil, of the Soviet Government in Spain appear to have set themselves to serve the national interests of the Soviet Union in the international arena by working for the negative object of preventing the victory of the Spanish Nationalists and their foreign Fascist allies; and, in pursuit of this aim, they appear to have done their utmost to maintain and consolidate the Spanish Popular Front. With this end in view they appear to have discouraged, and even positively resisted, all attempts on the part of the Spanish Anarcho-Syndicalists in the Republican camp

¹ For the geographical obstacles in the way of Russian action in Spain see p. 194, above.

² See vol. i, pp. 12 *segg.*

³ *Op. cit.*, p. 14.

⁴ See pp. 306-8, below.

to take advantage of the passion and turmoil of the war in order to oust the Liberal-Bourgeois wing of the Republican coalition and seize a monopoly of power for themselves, and they were perhaps still more hostile to the endeavours of non-Stalinian Communist groups in the Spanish Republican camp to subordinate the pursuit of victory in the war to the purpose of using the war as a means of propagating the world-revolution. In taking this line the Russian representatives of Stalin could count upon the co-operation of the numerically weak but morally resolute and practically efficient Spanish Communist Party. This internal struggle on the Republican side in Spain, behind the military front, sometimes rankled into open conflict in which Anarcho-Syndicalists and Stalinian Communists shed one another's blood, while Bourgeois Liberals and Stalinites worked hand in glove. In the course of the year 1937 the Stalinian policy of maintaining the Popular Front on the Republican side in Spain seems to have prevailed over the Trotskyite and Anarcho-Syndicalist policy of completing the revolution with one hand while carrying on the war with the other. In this outcome of the domestic struggle in the Republican part of Spain Stalin may be said to have defeated Trotsky in Spain in 1937 as he had defeated him in Russia already some ten years back, and it may be conjectured that, in Stalin's mind, this defeat of Trotsky on the domestic political front in Republican Spain was as important an objective as the defeat of Franco on the military front between the Spanish Republicans and the Spanish Nationalists. At any rate the Russian intervention in the internal administration of Republican Spain grew to dimensions which were comparable with those of the Russian intervention in the Spanish war. The band of Russian military instructors, artillery officers and airmen who were serving the Spanish Government as advisers and technicians was matched by a host of Russian officials, belonging to the OGPU, who were acting as the formidable organs of a Russian *imperium in a Spanish imperio*.

(h) THE INTERESTS AND MOTIVES OF PORTUGAL

None of the Great Powers of Europe was so closely and alarmingly affected by the outbreak of war in Spain on the 17th July, 1936, as the small European state which divided with Spain the political sovereignty over the Iberian Peninsula. Portugal shared with France, and France alone, the misfortune of having a common land frontier with the Peninsular state that was the theatre of hostilities; but in this matter Portugal's plight was far more serious than France's.

The Franco-Spanish land frontier was only one out of six land-frontiers along which France marched with other states, whereas Spain was Portugal's sole *état limitrophe*—and this along a frontier which had not been furnished by Nature, as the Franco-Spanish frontier was, with the physical cover of a mountain range. The Spanish-Portuguese frontier was cut and crossed by the valleys of two of the four rivers that rose on the Castilian plateau to reach the sea at the Portuguese coast.¹ Geographically, a Spain built out of a union between Castile and Portugal would have been a more natural growth than the historical Spain that had come into being through a union of Castile with a row of provinces on her opposite flank—from Asturias to Valencia inclusive—which were marked off from Castile physically by barriers only less effective than the Pyrenees themselves. The maintenance of Portugal's independence behind the more artificial frontier along which she marched, from end to end, with one single neighbour of a greatly superior calibre to her own had always been something of a *tour de force*; and Portugal could not but be shaken by the repercussions of Castilian convulsions. One immediate effect of the outbreak of war in Spain in the summer of 1936 was to break Portugal's normal overland communications by railway with the rest of the European Continent—all of which ran across Spanish territory in the sections nearest to the Portuguese frontier. Portugal suddenly found herself transformed into a virtual island with no means of communication with the rest of the world except by sea. But the greater part of Portugal's intercourse with foreign lands was in any case carried on by sea in normal times; and when her subsidiary land routes were closed, the temporary practical inconvenience of being reduced to an insularity which was, after all, the permanent lot of Portugal's ancient and prosperous ally Great Britain, was not so serious for Portugal as the political danger involved in her continental relation with her single Peninsular neighbour at a time when Spain was in a state of violent political flux.

By reason of the physical contiguity of the two Peninsular states, the Spanish War that broke out in 1936 would have presented a serious problem for Portuguese statesmanship in any political circumstances. It was a mischance for Portugal that she happened to be overtaken by this acute foreign complication at a delicate stage of her own domestic history.

¹ The Tagus and the Douro cut the frontier between Portugal and Spain; the Guadiana and the Minho delimited the frontier respectively at its two extremities. By the twentieth century the two Peninsular states had come to be insulated from one another to some extent by a border tract of relatively thinly populated territory.

The history of Portugal in the modern age had run parallel to that of Spain.¹ Like Spain, Portugal had declined from a zenith of wealth and power and glory at the opening of the modern age at the turn of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries of the Christian Era to a nadir of poverty and weakness and humiliation at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. For sixty years (A.D. 1581–1640) Portugal had actually been yoked with Spain by a personal union under the Hapsburg Crown; and, although she had shaken herself free again in the seventeenth century with the same courage and energy that had made her great in the fifteenth century, she had failed to save more than a fragment of her Asiatic empire from being conquered by the Dutch, and she had lived to see her American plantations secede from the mother country by a process of 'peaceful change' which produced the same result in the end as the fratricidal wars through which Spain and Great Britain lost theirs. At the same time, Portugal herself had sunk into a social lethargy which was punctuated, without being cured, by chronic political disorders. Her political malady had only been complicated by the introduction of a simulacrum of nineteenth-century Anglo-French parliamentary government. The misrule from which Portugal was suffering at home was reproduced in the African colonies which had remained under her flag and had been actually enlarged in area as an incidental result of the partition of the whole Continent of Africa between six European states during the last two decades of the nineteenth century. The sixteen years following the overthrow of the monarchy in 1910 were perhaps those in which the fortunes of Portugal were at their lowest ebb. Between 1910 and 1926 she went through sixteen revolutions and forty changes of ministry!² And meanwhile her reputedly misgoverned African colonies³ were attracting covetous glances from foreign eyes. On the eve of the General War of 1914–18 the British and German Governments had initiated a private agreement⁴ pre-arranging the future distribution of these Portuguese

¹ For a brief sketch of the facts of Spanish history in the modern age that would appear to be particularly relevant to the subject of the present volume see pp. 1 *seqq.*, above.

² S. G. West, *The New Corporative State of Portugal* (London, 1937, The New Temple Press), p. 5.

³ For a defence of the Portuguese colonial administration in recent times see A. Monteiro, *The Portuguese in Modern Colonisation* (Lisbon, 1936, Agency General for the Colonies). [This pamphlet reproduces a speech delivered in Lisbon on the 18th April, 1933, when the author was Minister for the Colonies.]

⁴ See G. P. Gooch and H. W. V. Temperley, *British Documents on the Origin of the War* (London, H.M. Stationery Office), vol. x, Part II; *Die Grosse Politik der Europäischen Kabinette* (Berlin, 1927, Deutsche Verlagsgesellschaft für Politik und Geschichte), vol. 37.

possessions in Africa in the event of the Portuguese Government's deciding one day to sell them. At that time the African residue of the Portuguese Empire seemed to have hardly a better expectation of life than the Empire of Morocco.

From this apparently desperate plight Portugal unexpectedly began to extricate herself by her own efforts in the post-war period. In 1926 a military revolt, which at the moment seemed no different in kind from its innumerable predecessors, resulted in the overthrow of a corrupt and ineffective parliamentary régime and in the installation of a General as Dictator. So far this was all of a piece with the similar chain of events which had turned a General into a Dictator in Spain three years before. Whereas, however, the Portuguese Dictator of 1926, General Carmona, was still in office in the summer of 1936, the Spanish Dictator of 1923, the Marqués de Estella, had fallen in 1930 to be followed by a bout of political instability which had toppled over, at last, into a civil war. This profound difference in the respective courses of Spanish and Portuguese history during the decade ending in 1936 had been mainly due to the personality and principles of Dr. Oliveira Salazar: a Portuguese peasant by birth, a Catholic Christian by conviction, and a professor of political economy by profession, whom the Prime Minister of the day, General Vicente de Freitas, had persuaded in April 1928 to leave his academic chair at Coimbra in order to take up the thankless office of Minister of Finance in Lisbon. Dr. Salazar—who had become disgusted with politics as the result of a brief experience of serving as a member of the now defunct Portuguese Parliament¹ and occupying the Ministry of Finance once before for a short spell in 1926—accepted the invitation on terms which partly transferred the Dictatorship of Portugal from the General's hands to the Professor's; and in the course of eight years this scholar-autocrat had achieved notable things. He had not only rehabilitated Portugal's dilapidated finances,² he had also laid the foundations for a corporative organization of Portuguese society which was intended to have a genuine life of its own in harmony with, but not under the thumb of, the authority of the state. The state at which Dr. Salazar was aiming was, according to his own account of it, to be 'authoritarian' without being 'totalitarian'.³

¹ Under Dr. Salazar's own subsequent régime a (bicameral) parliament was re-instituted in 1933.

² For the financial rehabilitation of the Portuguese colonies the credit appears to have been due to the Minister for the Colonies, Professor A. Monteiro.

³ See the very interesting passage quoted by West, *op. cit.*, p. 25, from a speech delivered by Dr. Salazar on the 26th May, 1934.

Dr. Salazar's idea was, in fact, not unlike Dr. von Schuschnigg's; but, until the outbreak of the war in Spain in the summer of 1936, the Portuguese Catholic Dictator enjoyed the advantage, which the Austrian Catholic Dictator never secured, of carrying out his arduous enterprise without being perpetually overshadowed by the menace of the irruption of a hostile force from the other side of the frontier.

Such a menace presented itself to Dr. Salazar's régime in Portugal when in Spain the forces of the Left and the Right fell into a physical conflict with one another which seemed unlikely to have any end less drastic than a complete overthrow of one or other party. Dr. Salazar seems to have been stricken with dismay at the prospect for his own régime if in this intemperate Spanish struggle the Popular Front were to emerge victorious. So violent a swing to the Left in the Spanish four-fifths of the Peninsula could perhaps hardly fail to affect the Portuguese remainder, and the Portuguese Dictatorship, though it might do credit to its species, was not exempt from the specific infirmity of the dictatorial system. Even if it stopped short of 'totalitarianism', an 'authoritarian' government meant, by definition, a restriction of at any rate political liberty;¹ an Opposition which was denied a pacific and constitutional means of expression and action could find no vent except through violence;² and if the assaulted and exasperated forces of the Left were eventually to gain the day in Spain, then the kindred forces in Portugal which Dr. Salazar's authoritative régime had repressed would be likely to attempt to reassert themselves, and might be expected to appeal to their victorious Spanish comrades for aid.³ In the flush of victory such aid might be forthcoming—the more so because it was one of the dreams of the Iberian Left to incorporate the whole of the Peninsula into a federation of national states, re-mapped on a linguistic basis, of which Portugal-cum-Galicia would be one.

These prognostications, which were disturbing for conservative Portuguese minds, were quickly borne out by events. The actual presence of 'Red' Spanish forces on the Portuguese border was not

¹ It could not, perhaps, be said that the Portuguese people had enjoyed much political liberty under the nominally parliamentary régime by which the Dictatorship had been preceded.

² At the time of the outbreak of the war in Spain, certain *fora* for the expression of opinion did exist in Portugal in the shape of a parliament, municipalities and corporations. On the other hand, there was also a censorship and a tradition of violence.

³ In this connexion it is to be noted that political refugees from Dr. Salazar's régime in Portugal had been given asylum and subsistence on the Spanish side of the frontier, while Portugal had given reciprocal hospitality to refugees of the Right from Spain.

a contingency that had to be faced by Dr. Salazar immediately, since in the early days of the war in Spain the Nationalist forces which had invaded Andalusia from the Spanish Zone of Morocco succeeded in joining hands, *via* Badajoz, with their fellow insurgents in León and Old Castile. Thenceforward, Portugal marched, along the whole length of her frontier, with the domain of the Spanish faction which was 'ideologically' in sympathy with the reigning régime in Portugal itself. Yet this speedy insulation of Portugal from the Republican part of Spain by a continuous belt of Nationalist territory¹ did not avert the outbreak, on the 8th September, 1936, of a mutiny on board two Portuguese warships lying in the Tagus off Lisbon.² The outbreak was quickly and easily suppressed; but, as was indicated by precedents at Kronstadt in 1917, at Kiel in 1918 and at Invergordon in 1931, disaffection in a navy was apt to be a symptom of a more widespread *malaise* in the country to which the disaffected navy belonged; and this appearance of naval unrest in Portugal was directly related to the upheaval in Spain, if there was any truth in the report that the intention of the mutineers, in the event of success, had been to take their ships to join that part of the Spanish Navy which had remained loyal to the Spanish Government.

While Dr. Salazar succeeded in staving off a revolution of the Left in Portugal, the increase of tension on the political plane drew the Portuguese 'authoritarian' régime towards the 'totalitarianism' which had been eschewed by the Portuguese Dictator in easier times. The organization of a 'Portuguese Legion' with a coloured shirt and with a preparatory youth organization showed the familiar Italo-Russian-German touch. On the other hand, there was a Portuguese Catholic current of antipathy towards German National Socialism. These domestic effects, in Portugal, of the war in Spain are, however, in themselves, outside the province of this *Survey*, which is directly concerned only with the effects on Portuguese foreign policy.

In this sphere the main effect was a sudden and, at least temporarily, almost complete reversal of a foreign policy which Portugal had previously been pursuing, with hardly a break, for little less than three hundred years.

In the seventeenth century the Portuguese people's two chief aims

¹ While the capture of Badajoz by the Spanish Nationalists insulated Portugal from Republican Spain, it at the same time injected into Portugal a number of Left-Wing Spanish refugees whose presence seems to have caused Dr. Salazar's Government some embarrassment.

² The two vessels had just returned home from Spanish waters that were under the Spanish Government's control.

had been to liberate Portugal herself from a Castilian yoke and to salvage a remnant of her overseas empire from Dutch aggression; and both these Portuguese aims were achieved by an alliance with England,¹ who in that century was drawn towards Portugal by the powerful bond of a twofold community of national enemies. Thereafter, both the independence and the surviving overseas possessions of Portugal had been guaranteed verbally by the British alliance and practically by the gradual establishment of a *Pax Britannica* which was at its strongest during the century ending in A.D. 1914. As citizens of a weak state with a great past, the latterday Portuguese were keenly aware of two vital interests which were also vital interests of the latterday British Empire. In general, they set store by the vindication of principles of law and order in international affairs as against *Faustrecht* and *Machiopolitik*; and in particular they were anxious to see it established that the title-deeds to colonial possessions should be respected even when the holder was in no position to defend his title by force.² So deeply in earnest were the Portuguese over these points of foreign policy that, in the General War of 1914–18, they went the length of actually intervening on the opposite side to a Germany who had simultaneously broken the rule of international law and impaired the security of all weak countries by her invasion of Belgium. Portuguese troops took their place among the Allied forces in France, and Portuguese East Africa suffered invasion from the German force in German East Africa. More recently still, under the Salazar régime itself, Portuguese policy had held to its traditional line when it had followed Great Britain's lead in an attempt to foil Italy's aggression against Abyssinia in 1935–6. During this international crisis, which was immediately antecedent to the Spanish war, the Portuguese Government had proclaimed, in plain and strong terms,³ their dismay at the prospect that a wanton act of aggression might be committed with impunity by a Great Power from Europe against a weak state in Africa. The force of the effect

¹ This alliance had originated in the fourteenth century, though it was not till the seventeenth century that it came to be of first-class importance.

² In this connexion the Portuguese had unpleasant memories of the British ultimatum of 1891 and of the Anglo-German Agreement, which was initialed on the 20th October, 1913, for an eventual partition of the Portuguese colonies between Great Britain and Germany if ever Portugal were willing to part with them (see p. 203, above). While the *Pax Britannica* did no doubt minister to the security of Portugal and to the integrity of the Portuguese colonial empire in a general way, every Portuguese who was old enough to remember the history of the quarter of a century immediately preceding the outbreak of the war of 1914–18 might be pardoned for sometimes feeling not quite sure whether Portugal's British ally was a watch-dog or a wolf.

³ See the *Survey for 1935*, vol. ii, p. 190.

of the outbreak of war in Spain upon Portuguese conservative minds may be measured by the fact that, a few months later, Portugal was actively and eagerly pursuing, for her own part, the Italo-German policy of tilting the scales in Spain in favour of the Nationalists and against the legitimate Government of the country which was Portugal's neighbour. In Dr. Salazar's mind the immediate Spanish threat to his own régime seems to have all but eclipsed the longer view of Portuguese national interests which he had inherited from ten generations of earlier Portuguese statesmen ¹

The difficulties which the Portuguese Government placed in the way of the conclusion and application of the Non-Intervention Agreement are recorded below.² Diplomatically, Portugal showed herself no more accommodating than Italy and Germany to Anglo-French desires. On the other hand, there was no certain evidence to show that, when once the Non-Intervention Agreement had been signed, Portugal broke her faith with the deliberate cynicism of the 'Axis' Powers. In the House of Commons at Westminster on the 30th November, 1936, Mr. Eden, on the British Government's behalf, declined to take steps to prohibit the exportation and carrying of arms from Great Britain to Portugal; and he based this refusal on the ground that it was not his information that Portugal was 'especially guilty' of the offence of breaking the Non-Intervention Agreement in the Spanish Nationalists' favour. On this point, the British Government were no doubt better placed for knowing the truth than were members of the public to whom the confidential information which was at the Government's disposal was not open; but at the same time the Opposition Members of Parliament to whose questions Mr. Eden was replying on this occasion had to reckon with the possibility that the British Government might be deliberately

¹ Dr. Salazar described his own attitude frankly in the following passage of a speech of the 6th July, 1937:

'We have special interests of our own in the Peninsula and run risks which other countries do not. We believe that public opinion in certain countries, especially in France and Great Britain, is ill-informed as to the true nature of the Spanish problem and of the events that have taken place in that country. Some people do not believe in the Communist peril; we, on the other hand, feel it, see it, and fear that Communism, with the connivance of other countries, may take root in Spain, and so destroy any chance of the Spanish people working out their own political salvation—for there could be no national liberty or independent choice in a state largely controlled by several Internationals. Hence our uncompromising attitude from the very start; hence our opposition to any form of non-intervention which should prejudice the chances of Spanish Nationalism, which stands between Portugal and Iberian Communism; hence the odium which we have incurred in certain quarters—we may add, quite unjustifiably.'

² See pp. 238, 241-2, 244-5.

turning a blind eye to Portuguese infractions of the Non-Intervention Agreement on the calculation that a strict insistence upon Portugal's keeping faith over non-intervention in Spain would be bought too dearly, from the British point of view, at the price of losing Portugal's good-will.

The truth was that, owing to the introduction of the 'ideological' factor into international politics, Great Britain was now having to compete with the 'Axis' Powers for the friendship of a Peninsular state whose co-operation she had been able to take for granted—and this even when her own conduct towards Portugal was not altogether friendly—for three hundred years past. In this competition the immediate Spanish menace to Dr. Salazar's régime in Portugal gave the 'Fascist' Powers a certain leverage on Portuguese policy. At the same time Dr. Salazar, as might be expected in a statesman of his standing, did not lose sight of the wider and less transient considerations which counselled Portugal not to sever an ancient connexion with Great Britain which might perhaps prove not less valuable to her in the future than it had proved in the past as a safeguard both for her independence at home and for her possessions overseas. On the 24th September, 1936, there was published in the Portuguese Press a statement from the pen of Dr. Salazar himself, in which he referred frankly to the divergence of views between Portugal and Great Britain in regard to policy towards Spain, expressed the opinion that Great Britain understood and respected the Portuguese standpoint, and prophesied that 'the result' could 'only be a better mutual understanding and better co-operation in the joint interests of the two nations'.

In the autumn and winter of 1937-8 renewed attempts were made to arrive at this better understanding and better co-operation.¹ On the 26th October, 1937, it was announced that consultations had been in progress between the British Foreign Office and the Portuguese Embassy in London with regard to the establishment of closer contact between the British and Portuguese defence services, and that the despatch of a British military mission to Portugal was under consideration. Three weeks later, however, it became known that, owing to considerations which had been put forward in Lisbon, the departure of the mission would be postponed until the spring of 1938, and on the 29th November it was officially announced that this would take place in February. At the turn of the years 1937-8 Anglo-Portuguese relations were reported to be showing a notable

¹ The ground had been prepared by the appointment of a new Portuguese Ambassador to the Court of Saint James's in January 1937.

improvement. A newly appointed British Ambassador, Sir Walford Selby, presented his letters of credence on the 23rd December; British military and air *attachés* were for the first time appointed to Lisbon exclusively; and on the 1st–4th February, 1938, the battleships *Rodney* and *Nelson* and five destroyers visited Lisbon. According to one account, however, the demonstrations of friendship on this last occasion were lessened in value by the fact that a squadron of German warships had arrived a few days before and that their visit had been arranged after it was known that the British warships were coming.¹ It was also perhaps significant that the visit of two British submarines and a depot ship to Lisbon on the 26th February–3rd March, 1938, should have been so closely followed by that of the Italian Eighth Cruiser Squadron on the 6th–10th March. Meanwhile the British Services Mission had arrived in Lisbon on the 20th February. It was headed by Rear-Admiral N. A. Wodehouse and included officers of all three fighting services. Conversations between members of the mission and representatives of the Portuguese Government began on the 24th February and continued during the next few weeks, with intervals for tours of inspection, and on the 30th March Mr. R. A. Butler stated, in the House of Commons at Westminster, that the mission was 'not expected to leave before May' but that 'good progress was being made in its discussions'.

(i) REPERCUSSIONS IN THE AMERICAS

While Portugal was more closely affected by the war in Spain than any other state in the world, no state in the Americas was so closely affected as any state in Europe, since American states might hope to keep clear, at any rate in the first stages, of a war which would threaten to engulf the whole of Europe if once it were to spread beyond the Spanish frontiers. This general difference in degree of concern was reflected in the fact that, whereas all states in Europe were invited to serve on the Non-Intervention Committee and accepted the invitation, no American state either received an invitation or asked for one. At the same time there were also differences in degree of concern in the Spanish war as between one American state and another.² The war on the other side of the Atlantic was felt in a personal way in certain Spanish-speaking American countries into which there had been a considerable immigration from Spain in recent years. These countries—namely, Chile, Argentina, Uruguay,

¹ *The New York Times*, 19th February, 1938.

² See the interesting analysis in *The Times* of the 24th August, 1937.

Paraguay, Mexico and Cuba—contained numbers of citizens or residents who had intimate personal ties with combatants in the Spanish war on either side;¹ and the presence of this element in the population of these American countries made feeling there more acute. The remainder of the Spanish-speaking American countries—which were strung along the west side of South America and along Central America from Bolivia at one end to Guatemala at the other²—were not affected in the same personal way because the element of Spanish origin in their population had not been reinforced by fresh immigrants for a long time past—in some cases not to any appreciable extent since the time of the original conquest in the sixteenth century. Nevertheless, in these other Spanish-speaking American countries too, the community of language and the associated community of culture³ brought the war in Spain home to the imaginations and feelings of the people more vividly than elsewhere. Brazil was affected in a similar fashion, though of course in a slighter degree, as a country which had likewise derived the dominant strain in its European population from a mother-country in the Iberian Peninsula.⁴ On the other hand, the three partly English-speaking and partly French-speaking American states—the United States, Canada and Haiti⁵—were not connected with Spain by any ties of blood, language or culture, and were therefore moved solely by considerations of national interest or 'ideological' sympathy. All American states, from Chile to Canada inclusive, with the possible exception of Mexico, were apparently of one mind in believing that their

¹ In Argentina, the great majority of the local Spanish colony seems to have been for the Government and against the Nationalists, and among the native Argentinians the same line was taken by the parties of the Opposition.

² The insular Dominican Republic ought perhaps to be added to this list.

³ In this case, as in other cases, community of culture and community of language were not co-extensive. In all the Spanish-speaking American countries one of the effects of their violent secession from Spain, in the second decade of the nineteenth century, had been a cultural alienation. Culturally, Spanish-speaking America had become, to a large extent, a dependency of nineteenth-century France. In recent years, however, Spain had begun to recapture some part of her lost cultural empire in the Americas. Students from Spanish-speaking American countries had been frequenting Spanish universities again, instead of going as a matter of course to the Sorbonne. The ill-starred university city on the north-western outskirts of Madrid had been intended to attract a Spanish-American academic *clientèle*.

⁴ Throughout Hispanic America, the spectacle of the war in Spain seems to have told in favour of the 'Triangle' Powers' thesis (see vol. i, p. 40) that there was no longer any possibility of finding a Liberal 'democratic' middle way between the two extreme alternatives of Fascism and Communism.

⁵ Haiti was wholly French-speaking; Canada was nearly half French-speaking; in the United States there was a French-speaking community in Louisiana.

national interest lay in keeping clear of European complications as far as possible. 'Ideologically', on the other hand, they were divided, and this on lines that only partially corresponded with the degree of their concern in the Spanish conflict.

The strongest 'ideological' sympathy for the Spanish Nationalists' cause was probably to be found in two non-Spanish-speaking countries, the French-speaking Canadian province of Quebec and the Portuguese-speaking United States of Brazil.¹ The strongest 'ideological' sympathy for the cause of the Spanish Government was certainly to be found in Mexico. In Quebec and Brazil a semi-Fascist movement was at this time in the ascendant, and in Quebec this 'ideological' sympathy for the Spanish Fascists was reinforced by a deeper and no doubt more permanent religious sympathy for the Spanish Clericals. The Mexican championship of the Spanish Government's cause sprang from the fact that the Mexican, like the Spanish, Government of the day stood for a popular uprising against an old régime of privilege, both lay and ecclesiastical. In Mexico, unlike Spain, the conflict of class was also a conflict of race. The peasants and workmen who had made themselves the masters in the Mexican state derived their origin, with only a moderate infusion of Spanish blood, from the native population which had been subjugated, some four hundred years back, by the Spanish *conquistadores*, while the *ci-devant* privileged class was mainly descended from these, as far as it did not consist of foreigners. In the Spanish-speaking states south of Mexico, from Guatemala to Bolivia inclusive, which had received fewer recent Spanish immigrants than Mexico, the coincidence of the race-division with the class-division was still closer. None of these countries had yet undergone a social revolution of the kind that had overtaken Mexico since 1910; and though their political life had been tempestuous since (and indeed also before) their attainment of independence, the kaleidoscopic vicissitudes of contending factions and of rival dictators had all taken place within the narrow circle of a privileged minority, descended from the Spanish *conquistadores* of those parts, who had never yet been put down from their seat by the subject majority of native stock.² Throughout this region power

¹ The openness of the Brazilian sympathy with the Spanish Nationalists seems to have moved the Argentinian Government to show discretion in displaying their own partiality for the same side in the Spanish conflict.

² The fact that they were a privileged and oppressively dominant minority had not deterred the successive authors of these *pronunciamientos* from invoking the principles and the watchwords of French, English and North American Liberalism. This Liberal façade now seemed likely to be abandoned for the reason mentioned on p. 211, footnote 4, above.

was still in the hands of the Spanish-descended 'Ascendancy', and this still ruling class championed the cause of the Nationalists in Spain as instinctively as the native supplacers of their cousins in Mexico championed the cause of the Popular Front. In Paraguay, as in Mexico, the native element in the population was dominant, but here it was of a Fascistic rather than a Communistic turn of mind. As for the three southernmost Spanish-speaking American states—Uruguay, Argentina and Chile—they stood in a category by themselves, for their population, like that of the United States and Canada, was of European origin in all classes, and the political sympathies of this population were in consequence divided very much on European lines. In each of these countries, almost every one of the warring factions in Spain had its partisans.¹ The policy of the three states, however, was determined by Governments of the Right which had come into power as a result of the local repercussions of the world economic depression;² and though these Governments were of a different composition and complexion from those of the Andean and Central American states, they agreed with them in sympathizing with General Franco.

The American state that went the farthest in translating its sympathies into action was Mexico. The shipment of war materials belonging to the Mexican Government on board a Spanish liner for delivery to the Spanish Government was reported from Vera Cruz on the 21st August, 1936. These appear to have been materials of Mexican manufacture; and on the 3rd January, 1937, it was announced at Washington by the Acting Secretary of State of the United States Government that the Mexican Government had let it be known that they would not allow aeroplanes or any other war materials coming from the United States to be sent to Spain through Mexico, even in the case of acquisitions made by corporations or private parties. Mr. Moore added that the Mexican Government's action was purely voluntary; that it was not the result of any protest on the part of the United States Government; and that there was no ground on which the United States could have legitimately protested, since the case was not covered by any treaty provision or statute. The adoption of this policy by President Cárdenas was vehemently opposed by the Mexican Left; and the question was not merely academic, since at the time there was in Mexico, awaiting shipment to Spain, a consignment of aeroplanes which were of United States

¹ See pp. 210–11, above.

² See the *Survey for 1930*, pp. 372–5; the *Survey for 1931*, pp. 93, 111–12; the *Survey for 1933*, pp. 325–6.

origin. On this point President Cárdenas's will prevailed;¹ but there was no difference of opinion among Mexican statesmen on the question whether Mexico should continue to exercise—so far as materials of Mexican manufacture were concerned—her unquestionable legal right to furnish the Spanish Government with supplies of arms.

On the 30th March, 1937, the permanent delegate of the Mexican Government at Geneva handed to the Secretary-General of the League of Nations a note of expostulation against the policy of non-intervention, *à propos* of a *communiqué*, published by the Chairman's Sub-Committee of the Non-Intervention Committee after its meeting of the 23rd March, which had referred to the possibility that non-European states might be invited to adhere to the Non-Intervention Agreement. On the 19th April, 1937, the Mexican delegate at Geneva explained the Mexican attitude further in a communication to the Press, in which he declared that non-intervention, as it was being practised, was a form of indirect assistance to the Spanish Nationalists which was in flagrant contradiction with the Covenant of the League. He also maintained that Spain was the victim of an aggression in face of which the states members of the League ought not to remain neutral.

At the opposite extreme from the Mexican Government, the Brazilian Congress observed, on the 19th September, 1936, a one minute's silence in honour of the Spanish Nationalist dead, and followed up this gesture on the 22nd September, 1936, by sending a message of sympathy to General Franco. On the latter date, the Uruguayan Government decided to break off relations with the Spanish Government on account of the arresting and shooting in Madrid of the three sisters of the Uruguayan consul. In May 1937, relations between the Peruvian Government and the Spanish Government became strained on account of two raids on the Peruvian consulate in Madrid by the Spanish public authorities.²

As for the English-speaking American peoples in the United States

¹ Some heart-burning was caused in Mexico when, after President Cárdenas had taken his unpopular decision out of deference to feelings at Washington, the Spanish merchant ship *Mar Cantábrico* arrived at Vera Cruz from New York laden with aeroplanes of United States manufacture which she had taken on board at that United States port at a moment when there was no legislation in force in the United States to enable the Administration to prevent this. (See p. 216, below.)

² See pp. 388–90, below, for the controversy between a number of Latin-American Governments and the Spanish Government over the question of refugees in the Embassies and Legations at Madrid. In this dispute, the lead was taken on the Latin-American side by the Governments of Argentina and of Chile.

and in Canada outside the Province of Quebec, the balance of public feeling would appear to have been hostile to the Spanish Nationalists, as representatives of the unpopular cause of Fascism, rather than favourable to a Spanish Popular Front which, in North American eyes, was too 'Red' in its political colour to merit any lively sympathy. Neither of these North American antipathies, however, was anything more than platonic when it was a question of an 'ideological' conflict on the other side of the Atlantic; and the avoidance of entanglement was the chief concern of English-speaking North America in the Spanish War from first to last.

On the outbreak of the war in July 1936 the Government of the United States, like other Governments, took immediate steps to protect their own citizens whose lives or property might be in danger. Within a week, two American warships had been dispatched to Spanish waters to take off American nationals, and by the beginning of September there were five units of the United States Navy off the coasts of Spain. On the 10th September the five warships were recalled, on the ground that all reasonable efforts had been made to secure the safety of American citizens in Spain, and that those who remained had been given ample warning of the risks that they were running.

On the 11th August there was published the text of instructions which had been circulated to American diplomatic and consular representatives defining the attitude of the Administration towards the Spanish war. This circular contained the following passage:

It is clear that our neutrality law with respect to the embargo of arms, ammunition, and implements of war has no application in the present situation, since that law applies only in the event of war between or among nations. On the other hand, in conformity with its well-established policy of non-interference with the internal affairs of other countries, whether in time of peace or in the event of civil strife, the Government will, of course, scrupulously refrain from any interference whatsoever in the unfortunate Spanish situation. We believe that American citizens both at home and abroad are patriotically observing this well-recognized American policy.

On the 26th August, 1936, a notification of the 20th August from the Spanish Government, proclaiming a war-zone round certain Spanish ports, was answered in a note from the United States Government by a refusal to recognize such a zone without an effective blockade.

The exercise of moral suasion upon American citizens not to turn the Spanish troubles to their own profit was successful in preventing the export of supplies to either side in Spain until the war had been

raging for more than five months. On the 28th December, however, it was announced at the State Department in Washington that, while United States firms had been urged to refuse orders from Spain, the existing Neutrality Act¹ did not forbid shipments to a country engaged in civil war, and that on this very day a licence had been granted for the export to Bilbao of aeroplanes, aeroplane parts, and engines worth more than £500,000. On the 29th December President Roosevelt approved proposals for the prompt passage through Congress of an amendment to extend the Neutrality Act to cover civil war as well as international war, and on the same day he publicly denounced the action of the United States citizen who had taken out the licences on the 28th December as 'legal but unpatriotic'. Meanwhile a further licence was taken out by another United States citizen for the export of war materials worth approximately £900,000, and on the 6th January, 1937, while the amendment was being rushed through Congress, a first consignment of the materials covered by the first of the two licences was hastily carried out to sea on board the Spanish steamer *Mar Cantábrico*.² On the 8th January, 1937, the new legislation received the President's signature and thereby became law. On the receipt of information from the United States Consul-General at Barcelona that 76 United States citizens had recently passed through that port with intention to volunteer for military service in Spain, the Acting Secretary of State at Washington telegraphed to the Consul-General on the 13th January, 1937, instructing him to bring the prohibitions on, and penalties attaching to, foreign enlistment under United States law to the attention of citizens who might be contemplating entering the military service of the Spanish Government or of the Spanish Nationalists. The Consul-General was further instructed to

point out to these persons also that the enlistment of American citizens in either of the opposing forces in Spain [was] unpatriotically inconsistent with the American Government's policy of the most scrupulous non-intervention in Spanish internal affairs.

On the 31st May, 1937, the Secretary of State at Washington expressed to the German Ambassador an earnest hope that the German Government might find a way for a peaceful adjustment of the *Deutschland* incident.³ But the state of mind of the United States Government was perhaps more illuminatingly revealed in the reported

¹ See the *Survey for 1935*, vol. ii, section (vii).

² The cargo which the *Mar Cantábrico* carried did not reach its intended destination, for the ship was intercepted by the Spanish Nationalists in Spanish waters.

³ See pp. 312-13, below.

reply of Mr. Hull to four members of the House of Representatives who called on him on the 2nd June, 1937, to urge that the Neutrality Act should be applied to Germany and Italy. Mr. Hull was said to have answered:

This is not our war. We must be cautious. We must be quiet.

This was an 'Anglo-Saxon attitude' which was being struck, at the time, by the Government of every English-speaking country in the world with the possible exception of New Zealand.

(j) SENTIMENT AND POLITICS IN EIRE

At the time of the outbreak of the Spanish war in 1936 Eire was, next to Quebec, the most whole-heartedly Catholic country in the world; and issues in which the Catholic Church was conspicuously concerned were the only foreign affairs, outside the almost all-absorbing question of Irish-English relations, which were capable of arousing any strong interest and feeling among the Irish public. In Irish eyes the Spanish Nationalists seemed to be fighting the battle of the Church, and the Spanish Government the battle of Antichrist; and the force of the wind of public feeling tempted politicians to trim their sails to it.

The Cumann na nGaedheal party, which was at this time languishing in the wilderness without much prospect of regaining office, made haste to adopt General Franco's cause as their own on the chance of thereby regaining some of the popularity that they had forfeited to Fianna Fail. And before the end of August 1936 the leader of the Blueshirts, General O'Duffy, announced that he was raising a brigade of Irish volunteers to fight in General Franco's army. The Irish General duly sailed from Eire for Spain on the 20th November, 1936, at the head of a force which he brought home again on the 21st June, 1937. Meanwhile the Irish Labour Movement had been torn in two between its religious sympathy for the Spanish Nationalists and its social sympathy for the Spanish Popular Front. For Irish Labour this issue was brought to a head by the British Labour Movement's prompt and emphatic championship of the Spanish Government's cause,¹ since the close association of Irish Labour with British Labour, which dated from the days of the United Kingdom, had survived the political secession of the Irish Free State. After some heart-burning and embarrassment, the Irish Labour Movement decided to go its own way. The Irish Catholic hierarchy, on the other

¹ See p. 156, above.

hand, were as prompt and demonstrative as the British Labour Movement were in hoisting their colours. At their first meeting after the outbreak of the Spanish war, which took place at Maynooth on the 13th October, 1936, they issued a pronouncement expressing their sympathy with Catholic Spain in the 'ruin and shame' that it had 'been made to endure at the hands of an infamous minority under foreign direction'.

Meanwhile, before the end of August 1936, the Government in Dublin had adhered to the Non-Intervention Agreement, and in the Dail at Dublin on the 17th February, 1937, President de Valera moved the first reading of a Spanish Civil War Non-Intervention Bill for prohibiting citizens of Eire from participating in the Spanish hostilities. On this occasion he parried leading questions on the two points of according recognition to General Franco's Government and withdrawing the diplomatic representative of Eire from Valencia, and at the time of writing the Government of Eire had not yet followed the example of certain Latin-American countries and of Germany and Italy in recognizing the Nationalist régime as the Government of the whole of Spain. Having accepted the principle of non-intervention, the Government of Eire seem, indeed, to have refrained from any open display of partisanship, though the attitude which Mr. de Valera adopted at the League Assembly in Geneva in September 1937 (when he refused to vote for a resolution which provided for a reconsideration of the policy of non-intervention unless means could be found in the near future for making it effective)¹ was perhaps coloured to some extent by a belief that the abandonment of non-intervention would react in favour of the Spanish Republicans.

(k) THE POLICY OF THE HOLY SEE

Of all the Powers of the contemporary world, the Holy See would manifestly have been the least open to criticism if, upon the outbreak of the war in Spain, it had broken off diplomatic relations with the Spanish Government and had openly espoused the cause of the Nationalists; for the Holy See stood solely for the Catholic Church, and an aggressive anti-clericalism was the one solid plank that was common to the platforms of all the parties represented on the Spanish Popular Front with the exception of the Communists² and the Basque

¹ See pp. 360-2, below.

² The Communists' paramount aim at this time was to build up a 'united front' against Fascism, and, with this in view, they were making strenuous

and Catalan Nationalists.¹ In this matter there was an *union sacrée* between the Liberal Bourgeoisie and the Anarcho-Syndicalist majority of the 'Red' working class. The offensive against the Church that was launched in the Constituent Cortes in the early days of the Spanish Republic has been touched upon above,² and the outbreak of civil war in July 1936 had been taken by the populace as a signal for widespread outrages against ecclesiastics and ecclesiastical buildings of all kinds. Whether, or to what extent, the Catholic Church in Spain had, or had not, deserved the popular hatred which thus discharged itself were questions that were hardly material to the fact that this Church's fate was bound to excite feelings of dismay and indignation in the Vatican City, yet in these provocative circumstances the Holy See exercised an exemplary self-restraint which was not practised by all the local hierarchies in all the national provinces of this oecumenical Church.³

efforts to induce the Catholics to co-operate with them, not only in Spain, but equally in all countries where the Catholic element in the population was important—e.g. in Austria and in France. On this issue the Communists were at loggerheads with the Austrian Social-Democrats, with the French Socialists, and with the Spanish Anarcho-Syndicalists. In Spain, during the war that broke out in 1936, the Communists protested strongly and openly against the persecution of religion; they did their utmost to secure the restoration of Catholic worship; and they were close allies of the devoutly Catholic Basque Nationalists.

¹ See pp. 5-6 and *n.*, above.

² See pp. 16-18.

³ The Vatican did not officially endorse a joint pastoral letter of the 1st July, 1937, which was issued by the Catholic hierarchy in Spain, as represented by the signatures of two cardinals, six archbishops, thirty-five bishops, and five vicars capitular. The first signature was, however, that of the Cardinal Archbishop of Toledo, who was the semi-official representative of the Vatican *au grès* General Franco's Government and who would hardly have identified himself with any manifesto that was not agreeable to the Holy See. This Spanish pastoral letter combined, as was only to be expected in the circumstances, an *apologia* for the past history of the Catholic Church in Spain with a defence of the Nationalists' action in taking up arms against the legitimate Government of their country. This frank and vehement partisanship was, in the Spanish hierarchy, perfectly comprehensible, even though it might not be entirely politic. It was more surprising to see pro-Nationalist feelings expressed with almost equal violence by Catholic prelates in the British Isles. On the 7th August, 1936, the Catholic Archbishop of Westminster, Dr. Hinsley, published a statement suggesting the reflexion that 'our own house is in danger when our neighbour's party wall is aflame'; demanding that 'we in this country shall not be entangled in the schemes of those sinister forces which are fanning and feeding the conflagration'; ordering the daily recitation, in his diocese, of a prayer from the Missal asking God to 'crush the heathen peoples whose trust is in their ferocity'; and appending a letter of the 31st July from the Rector of the English College at Valladolid in which Mgr. Henson declared that the Spanish combatants ought to be called, not 'the Government forces' and 'the Rebels', but 'the rabble' and 'the forces

This Vatican policy of reserve was no doubt dictated by a number of considerations. First and foremost, many recent events had brought home to the statesmen in the Vatican the untowardness of the effects that were apt to follow from the Church's going into politics ; and taking sides in a civil war would mean going into politics with a vengeance. Then, again, the combatants in Spain were not neatly divided, even from the Church's point of view, into Nationalist legions of light and Republican legions of darkness. General Franco's partisans were far from consisting entirely of Carlists for whom the war was a Catholic crusade. There were Fascists, Spanish as well as Italian, in the Nationalist ranks ; and there were also German National-Socialists, whose purpose in fighting for General Franco was certainly not to force Spain back into the fold of the Church ! Even among General Franco's non-Fascist Spanish supporters there were some who were frankly fighting for causes which the Pope could hardly approve. There were capitalists and aristocrats who were fighting to recover their lost wealth and privileges—and it was the Catholic Church's policy not to take sides in a class struggle. Again, there were Castilian nationalists (among them, General Franco himself) who were fighting to crush the nationalism of the Catalans and the Basques and to establish at last, on the ruins of regional particularism, that uniform centralized Greater Castile which had been the dream of Castilian chauvinism ever since the days of King Philip II. It was the Catholic Church's policy not to take sides with one nationalism against another ; and the element of Castilian nationalism in General Franco's programme must have been peculiarly embarrassing to the Vatican, because the Three Basque Provinces and Catalonia, whose political autonomy and local culture and national languages General Franco was determined ruthlessly to repress, were, next to Carlist Navarre, the two least anti-clerical parts of Spain.¹ During the time of tribulation through which the Church in Spain as a whole had been living since the inauguration of the Republic, the Catalans had refrained from molesting her,² while the Basques

of Christian Law and Order'. Similar sentiments were more temperately expressed by the Catholic Bishop of Southwark in a letter, addressed to the Press Association, which was published on the 4th September, 1936. In a letter of the 23rd July, 1937, published in *The Times* on the 26th, Dr. Hinsley supported an appeal for a united Christian front which had been made in the columns of the same newspaper by Sir Henry Lunn. The manifesto on the Spanish war which was issued on the 13th October, 1936, by the Catholic hierarchy in Ireland has been noticed on p. 218, above.

¹ See pp. 5-6, 38, 40, above.

² Even in Barcelona there had been markedly fewer anti-clerical outrages than in any of the other great cities of Spain since the fall of the monarchy

had stood forth as her champions, and this not merely in their own country but in the Cortes at Madrid.¹ The Vatican could hardly give its blessing to a Castilian nationalist war of aggression against Basque and Catalan national liberties.

These considerations perhaps explain, between them, a Papal prudence which must have caused General Franco some disappointment. On the vexed question of diplomatic recognition, for example, the Pontifical Year Book for A.D. 1937 showed that Papal diplomatic representatives were accredited to both Valencia and Burgos and that representatives of both the two rival Governments in Spain were reciprocally accredited to the Holy See. The representatives exchanged between the Vatican City and Valencia were, however, described in the Year Book as being 'absent', while those exchanged between the Vatican City and Burgos were described as being 'semi-official'—a status with which they might perhaps be content so long as they were allowed to enjoy the practical advantage of being on the spot and doing their business. The 'semi-official' representative of Burgos was received in audience by the Pope at Castel Gandolfo on the 23rd June, 1937.

Diplomatic discretion did not deter the Pope from doing what he could to restrain the combatants in Spain from committing atrocities and to mitigate the sufferings of their victims. In the early weeks of the war he appears to have protested against the popular criminal outbreaks on the Republican side; and he did not conceal his feelings in an address which he delivered on the 14th September, 1936, at Castel Gandolfo, to 500 Spanish refugees from the fury of the Spanish Government's partisans. On the other hand, it was announced in the Vatican City on the 25th June, 1937, that the Cardinal Secretary of State had telegraphed to the Archbishop of Toledo instructing him to beseech General Franco to exercise the greatest moderation in his operations against the Basque country, where he would be dealing with a devoutly Catholic population and clergy.

in April 1931; and such outrages as had been perpetrated here could not be put down entirely to the Catalans' account, since the working class in Barcelona was, as has been noted above (see p. 31 *n.*), largely of non-Catalan provenance. Considering the strength of modern French influence in Catalonia, the absence of anti-clericalism there—as far as this could be inferred from the non-communion of positive acts of sacrilege—was even more remarkable than the devoutness of the Basques.

¹ See p. 40, above.

(ii) The Powers and Non-Intervention

(a) INTRODUCTORY NOTE

The policy of non-intervention in Spain,¹ which was adopted on the initiative of France and of which Great Britain subsequently became the leading advocate, was put into effect six weeks after the outbreak of the civil war, and it was still nominally in force, though its maintenance was then admittedly precarious, at the end of the year 1937 (the date which closes the period under review in the present volume). The object of the promoters of the policy was to prevent the Spanish conflict from expanding into an open war between Great Powers in an arena extending far beyond the bounds of the Iberian Peninsula, and at the same time to safeguard the independence of the Spanish nation and its freedom to decide its own destiny. During the period of fifteen months between the adoption of the policy of non-intervention and the end of the year 1937, the purpose of avoiding the extension of the area of fighting beyond the frontiers of Spain was achieved—even though, as the Spanish Republican Government were not slow to point out, their unhappy country itself became the theatre of an international war in fact. Disappointing as the results of the Non-Intervention Agreement were to prove in practice, it is probably true to say that at no time between the date of the conclusion of the agreement and the end of 1937 (save perhaps for a few days in June 1937)² did the danger that the conflagration would spread all over Europe appear as acute as it had seemed during the first five or six weeks of the civil war. The states of Europe might still be standing uncomfortably close to the edge of the precipice; but the facts that the Governments had entered into an agreement not to intervene in Spain, and that they continued to pay lip-service to the principle of non-intervention (even though some of them were engaged at the same time in evading to the best of their ability the obligations into which they had entered), indicated that even the most aggressive-seeming among them were

¹ The implications of the idea that the attitude of other states towards a state torn by civil war should be governed by the principle of non-intervention, and the difference between this conception of the duty of states in such circumstances and the 'pre-war' conception of neutrality, were matters of great interest and importance from the point of view of the development of international law. For this aspect of non-intervention, which cannot be discussed here, see, for instance, Professor H. A. Smith: 'Some Problems of the Spanish Civil War' in *British Year Book of International Law*, 1937 (Oxford University Press, 1937), and 'Spain: Non-Intervention and Neutrality' in *The Bulletin of International News*, Vol. XIII, No. 5 (29th August, 1936).

² See p. 314, below.

genuinely afraid of taking the final step which might plunge them into the abyss

In the following pages will be recounted the history of the adoption of the policy of non-intervention, of the work of the Committee which was set up in London to supervise its application, of the establishment and partial breakdown of a system of control over traffic with Spain, and of the persevering efforts which were made, under British leadership and in the face of resistance both active and passive from other Powers, to secure the effective fulfilment of the pledges not to intervene in Spain which had been given by all the states of Europe. The story is a long and complicated one, and it may provide a guiding thread to help the reader through the labyrinth if the detailed narrative is prefaced by a sketch of the outstanding features in the complex of international relations of which Spain was the pivot during the sixteen months from August 1936 to December 1937.

The original proposal for an agreement to refrain from intervening in the Spanish civil war by sending supplies of war material to either party was made by the French Government to the Governments of Great Britain and Italy on the 1st August, 1936 (a few days after the occurrence of an incident which proved beyond doubt that Italy was sending help to the Spanish Nationalists).¹ At the suggestion of Great Britain, the negotiations were immediately extended to include the three other states (Germany, Russia and Portugal) which had a special interest in the Spanish question, and subsequently all the states of Europe were invited to join in the proposed agreement. After a series of delays, for which the 'Fascist' Powers were mainly responsible, the assent of all six of the principally interested Powers was obtained by the 24th August, and all six had taken the necessary legislative measures to give effect to the agreement by the 28th August. The adherence of all the lesser European states² followed within the next few days, and on the 9th September the first meeting took place in London of the Committee which the states had agreed to set up in order to supervise the execution of the Non-Intervention Agreement. Portugal, however, was an absentee from this meeting, and her scruples against representation on the Committee were not overcome until the 28th September.

Throughout the next six weeks the Non-Intervention Committee was engaged in the examination of charges against various states which were accused of committing breaches of the Non-Intervention Agreement. Though little doubt was entertained in any quarter that

¹ See p. 52, above, and p. 232, below.

² For the special position of Switzerland see p. 244, below.

Germany, Italy and Russia were all in some degree guilty on this charge, the Committee in each case returned a verdict of not proven ; and the principal result of this otherwise fruitless period of mutual recriminations was to throw into relief the need for a system of supervision which would make it a less simple matter for Governments to evade their undertakings. The discussion of a plan for controlling traffic with Spain by land and by sea had been initiated before the end of October, and though a number of obstacles were encountered, the Non-Intervention Committee gave their approval in principle in the middle of November to proposals which had been drawn up by a sub-committee. At the beginning of December these proposals were communicated in outline to the two parties in Spain, whose assent was necessary because the plan provided for the posting of international observers on the Spanish side of the various Spanish land frontiers and at Spanish ports.

Meanwhile, on the 18th November, the Governments of Germany and Italy had taken the step of recognizing the administration of General Franco (whose troops then appeared to be on the point of capturing Madrid) as the Government of Spain, and almost simultaneously General Franco announced his intention of instituting a virtual blockade of Barcelona. Faced with this threat of a blockade, the Governments of France and Great Britain decided not to grant belligerent rights to General Franco and to take steps to protect their merchant shipping from molestation. In the second week of December these events were discussed at Geneva by the Council of the League of Nations, to which the Spanish Government had appealed under Article 11 of the Covenant against the intervention of Germany and Italy in Spanish affairs. The resolution which the Council adopted on the 12th December, 1936, recalled the obligation of all states to respect the territorial integrity of another state and to refrain from intervention in its internal affairs, and expressed approval of the policy of non-intervention and of a recent Anglo-French attempt to obtain more effective co-operation in the execution of the Non-Intervention Agreement and to promote a settlement of the Spanish conflict by mediation.

This Anglo-French *démarche*, which was made on the 4th December, produced no result—the idea of mediation being equally unacceptable to both parties in Spain. The principal concern of France and Great Britain was now to extend the scope of the Non-Intervention Agreement in order to cover the despatch of volunteers to Spain—a problem which had just been raised in an urgent form by the report of the landing of a large body of German infantry at Cádiz.

Further detachments of German reinforcements were sent to General Franco during December, but after the turn of the year Germany relaxed her efforts in this direction¹—partly, it appeared, as a result of the energetic steps taken by France in connexion with rumours regarding the German penetration of Spanish Morocco—and it was Italy who continued to pour troops into Spain during 1937. The efforts of the Non-Intervention Committee to reach an agreement for putting an end to this form of intervention, which proceeded side by side with their efforts to devise a practicable plan of control, met with a good deal of obstruction from the 'Fascist' Powers, and this was not removed by another joint appeal for co-operation which was made by France and Great Britain on Christmas Eve. It was not until the middle of February 1937 that an agreement was reached for the prohibition of the enlistment or despatch of volunteers to Spain. This agreement was put into force on the 20th February, and at the same time a solution was found for a difficulty which had arisen in regard to the supervision of the Portuguese-Spanish frontier. A special Anglo-Portuguese agreement was concluded, under which the Portuguese Government agreed that the Portuguese side of the Portuguese-Spanish frontier should be supervised by British observers attached to the British Embassy in Lisbon instead of by international observers as proposed in the plan of control which had been drawn up by experts.² The original proposal for control had had to be amended owing to the impossibility of obtaining the co-operation of both the contending parties in Spain; and on the 16th February, 1937, the Non-Intervention Committee had approved the general lines of a new scheme. This provided for a control of the non-Spanish side of the land frontiers of Spain by corps of observers, for the embarkation of observers on merchant ships bound for Spain, and for a division of the coasts of Spain into zones which were to be patrolled respectively by the warships of France, Great Britain, Germany and Italy. There were further delays, partly of a technical nature, before this scheme could be put into force; but it was finally brought into operation in a skeleton form on the 20th April and into full operation ten days later.

Meanwhile, at the beginning of March, the Non-Intervention Committee had begun to discuss the possibility of taking further steps to localize the conflict and deprive it of any international character by withdrawing from Spain the foreign nationals who were taking part in the war on one side or the other; and this question continued

¹ See p. 192, above, and pp. 280-1, below.

² See p. 255, below.

to occupy their attention, with interruptions, until the end of the period under review. The 'Fascist' Powers had signified at an early stage that they attached the greatest importance to the solution of this question, but that did not prevent them from putting every possible obstacle in the way of a settlement. On the 23rd March, indeed, the representative of Italy (whose troops had just suffered a severe reverse on the Madrid front)¹ declined to discuss the question of withdrawing volunteers at all, and although this standpoint was abandoned in the middle of April, after a period of diplomatic negotiation, the attitude of Italy and Germany continued to be decidedly unhelpful. Plans for the withdrawal of volunteers were, however, worked out by a technical committee during May, and at the end of that month the League Council (which had been called upon by the Spanish Government to discuss the situation again) gave its blessing to the attempt which was being made to arrange for the recall of all foreign nationals serving in Spain. At this stage the efforts of the London Committee in this direction had virtually to be suspended in consequence of the reaction of Germany and Italy to a naval incident.

For some months past, merchant shipping had been suffering to a serious extent from interference on the part of General Franco's warships, and there had been incidents affecting British and French warships; but while repeated protests had been made to the Nationalist authorities, there had been nothing in the nature of retaliation for the attacks on foreign shipping (which had not for the most part involved serious damage or loss of life). On the 24th May, 1937, however, an Italian warship engaged in the naval patrol was bombed by Spanish Government aeroplanes at Palma (Majorca) and several lives were lost. The Italian authorities did not take reprisals for this act, but the German Government failed to exercise the same restraint when their turn came a few days later. The bombing of the *Deutschland* at Iviza on the 29th May, 1937, did indeed cause heavy losses among the crew; but that fact was not generally felt to justify the sequel—the bombardment of the Spanish port of Almeria by German warships on the 31st May. On the same day, the German and Italian Governments announced their withdrawal from participation in the naval patrol round the coasts of Spain and in the work of the Non-Intervention Committee until such time as guarantees against the recurrence of such acts should have been provided.

On the 12th June, 1937, an agreement was reached, providing for guarantees against future attacks on ships engaged in the naval

¹ See pp. 65-6, above.

patrol and for immediate consultation between the four patrolling Powers in the event of any future incident. A week later these arrangements were put to the test, when the German Government reported that the cruiser *Leipzig* had been attacked by a submarine. The prescribed consultations took place, but France and Great Britain refused, pending further investigation, to agree to the German proposal for a joint naval demonstration in Spanish waters. The negotiations therefore broke down on the 22nd June, and on the 23rd June Germany and Italy withdrew definitively from the naval patrol scheme, though not from the sea or land observation schemes or from the Non-Intervention Committee.

On the 29th June the French and British Governments submitted to the Non-Intervention Committee the proposal that they should take over the patrolling of the zones which Germany and Italy had abandoned, with neutral observers on their ships as a guarantee of impartiality. This suggestion was unacceptable to Germany and Italy, who, on the 2nd July, made the counter-proposal that the naval patrol should be abandoned (though not the system of taking observers on board merchant ships); that the control of land frontiers should be maintained; and that both parties to the Spanish civil war should be granted belligerent rights. This proposal found no favour with most of the members of the Non-Intervention Committee, and on the 9th July the British Government were invited to make an attempt to bridge the gulf between the opposing points of view. On the same day the French Government announced that they could not continue after the 13th July to accept international supervision of their Spanish frontier, in view of the fact that Portugal had suspended the facilities granted to British observers on her frontier on the break-down of the naval patrol scheme.

On the 14th July, 1937, the British Government produced their proposal for a compromise. This provided for a reconstitution and strengthening of the scheme of control and for a linking together of the questions of withdrawing volunteers and recognizing the belligerent status of the two parties to the civil war. The suggestion was that limited belligerent rights* should be granted as soon as 'substantial progress' had been made in the withdrawal of foreign nationals.

The British plan was adopted as a basis for discussion by the Non-Intervention Committee on the 16th July; but during the next fortnight a controversy took place regarding the order in which the various parts of the British plan were to be discussed. At the end of July a complete deadlock was created by the refusal of Russia

even to consider the recognition of belligerency until all foreign nationals had left Spain. During August, discussion of the British compromise was in suspense, while attention came to be concentrated more and more upon the problem of protecting shipping in the Mediterranean from 'piratical' attacks by aircraft, surface vessels and submarines.

At the beginning of September the French and British Governments decided to summon a Conference of states with special interests in the Mediterranean to devise means of dealing with the menace of piracy. The invitation to the Conference was refused at the last moment by Italy and Germany, as a consequence of a Russian accusation that Italy was responsible for piratical attacks on Russian merchant ships; but representatives of nine states assembled at Nyon on the 10th September, 1937. On the 14th an agreement was signed establishing a system for the protection of non-Spanish merchant ships, whereby the principal trade routes in the Mediterranean were to be patrolled (French and British warships were to be responsible for the patrol on the high seas, and the lesser Mediterranean states were to be responsible only in their own territorial waters) and any submarine found in suspicious circumstances was to be attacked. On the 17th September a supplementary agreement was signed extending the arrangements so as to cover protection of non-Spanish merchant ships against piratical attacks by aircraft or surface vessels. A protest by the Spanish Government against their exclusion from the Nyon arrangements was considered by the League Council in the middle of September, but no action was taken; and although a resolution, which was couched in strong terms and foreshadowed the abandonment of the policy of non-intervention if pledges continued to be broken, was adopted by the majority vote of a Committee of the Assembly at the end of September and received the support of thirty-two of the forty-eight states represented at the plenary session of the Assembly, its formal adoption by the Assembly was prevented by the adverse votes of Albania and Portugal.

Meanwhile, before the Nyon Conference had concluded its work, Italy had been invited by France and Great Britain to take part in the anti-piracy patrol. Italy rejected the minor rôle which was offered to her at first, but negotiations were later opened on the basis of equal Italian participation with the two other patrolling Powers, and these negotiations were successfully concluded in Paris on the 30th September, 1937. France and Great Britain were disappointed, however, in the hope which they had entertained (principally as a

result of Franco-Italian conversations which had taken place in Geneva on the 22nd September, on Italian initiative) that it might now be possible to tackle the problem of foreign nationals in Spain afresh through the medium of further tripartite conversations. On the 10th October Italy refused a formal Anglo-French invitation to enter into such conversations, and suggested that the problem of withdrawing volunteers should be referred back to the Non-Intervention Committee. This suggestion was accepted by the British and the French Government, and the latter (though they had to reckon with an increasingly strong popular feeling that German and Italian activity in Spain constituted a direct threat to French security) did not press a proposal which they were believed to have made that there should be a definite time limit for the discussion of withdrawal of volunteers, at the expiration of which the question of opening the Franco-Spanish frontier for the passage of supplies to the Spanish Republicans would be considered.

In the middle of October, therefore, the attempt to make some headway on the problem of withdrawing volunteers was resumed by the sub-committee of the Non-Intervention Committee, and after a fortnight of concentrated activity all the members of the Non-Intervention Committee except Russia were at length able, on the 4th November, 1937, to record their acceptance in principle of the British plan of the 14th July, 1937. This result was only made possible by concessions on the part of Russia and of Italy and Germany. Russia consented to abstain from voting on the proposal to grant belligerent rights instead of voting against it; and the 'Fascist' Powers accepted the compromise making the grant of belligerent rights dependent upon substantial progress in the withdrawal of volunteers—thus abandoning a position which they had taken at one stage of the negotiations, when they had insisted that their acceptance of the plan must be conditional upon its acceptance by all the Powers represented on the Committee. In return it was conceded to the 'Fascist' Powers that if Russia maintained her attitude regarding belligerent rights some compensating arrangement should be made to restore the balance of the British plan; and in these circumstances Russia soon found it expedient to change her line. The Soviet Government's acceptance in principle of the British plan on the 16th November was followed on the 20th November by the concurrence of General Franco and on the 1st December by that of the Spanish Republican Government. Nevertheless, the terms in which all these interested parties had expressed their agreement made it plain that the British proposals were still to have a host of difficulties placed in their way; and, in particular,

no understanding was yet in sight at the close of the year 1937 on the crucial question of what constituted the 'substantial progress' in withdrawal of volunteers which was to be achieved before belligerent rights were granted.

(b) THE FRENCH PROPOSAL FOR A NON-INTERVENTION AGREEMENT
AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE LONDON COMMITTEE

On the outbreak of the war in Spain, the first concern of the Governments of other countries was to take steps for the protection of their own nationals whose lives and property might be in danger as a result of the fighting. During the first weeks of the war foreign warships made frequent visits to Spanish ports for this purpose, and those among the foreigners resident in Spain who were willing to leave a country where many of them had their sole means of livelihood were taken on board for transport to their countries of origin.¹ This activity was not confined to the warships of Powers which normally maintained fleets in the Mediterranean. On the 21st July it was announced in Washington that a United States battleship which was then at Cherbourg and a cruiser which was on its way to Europe had been ordered to Spanish waters in order to evacuate American citizens if necessary.² By the last week of July the German Government had also dispatched a naval force consisting of two 'pocket-battleships', a cruiser and three torpedo boats. The presence of these German warships off the coasts of Spain had the justification that for ideological reasons the nationals of Germany, like those of Italy, were undoubtedly in special danger of suffering injury to their persons or property at the hands of supporters of the Spanish Government. German property was damaged during the disturbances which marked the opening phase of the civil war in Barcelona,³ and the German Government had already made a demand for compensation on this account before they received the news of the death, on the 24th July, of four Germans who were said to have been condemned to death by a revolutionary tribunal at Barcelona. The deaths of three more German subjects in Barcelona and of two Italians were reported during the first days of August, and several more Italians lost their lives during that month.

¹ The British Navy was especially active in the work of evacuating refugees, whether of British or other nationality. By the end of the first week in September 4,450 refugees had been taken off in British ships, and only 1,771 of these were British subjects.

² See also p. 215, above.

³ See p. 49, above.

It did not need these incidents, with the opening which they offered for intervention by the 'Fascist' Powers, to throw into relief the danger that the Spanish conflagration might set Europe ablaze.¹ The extent to which the Soviet Union had been intervening in Spanish affairs before the outbreak of the civil war might be a matter of uncertainty,² but there could hardly be any doubt that the Spanish Republican Government would be able to count on moral if not material support from Moscow. On the other hand, within a few days of the rising in Morocco rumours were beginning to circulate that the Nationalists not only had the sympathy of Germany and Italy but were actually receiving supplies from those countries. It was in these circumstances that the plan for what came to be known as 'non-intervention' in Spain had its origin in Paris.

Since French sympathies—or at any rate the sympathies of most of the supporters of the Popular Front—were naturally with the Spanish Republicans, the French Government might have been expected to take the line that there was no reason for refusing to let the legally constituted Government of Spain have munitions and other supplies which they needed to help them in putting down an insurrection. In fact, however, it took Monsieur Blum and his

¹ The situation at Tangier was also a possible source of international complications which gave rise to some anxiety during the first weeks of the war. Within a week of the 17th July the authorities at Tangier were greatly perturbed by reports that the Spanish Nationalists intended to attack warships which had remained loyal to the Spanish Government and which were lying in Tangier harbour. On the 29th July the International Commission of Control (the Chairman of which was an Italian) passed by a majority vote a resolution drawing attention to the danger that 'the activities of the Spanish Navy in the port of Tangier' might 'cause new acts of war and new breaches of the permanent neutrality of the Zone', and a special commission was established to exercise control over the port and to take measures for the security of the town. Thereupon the Spanish Government intimated that they had no intention of using Tangier as a base, and declared that only one Spanish warship remained in the roadstead. On the 4th August, however, General Franco protested strongly (apparently for the second time) against the action of the Commission of Control in allowing the Spanish Government's ships to continue to use Tangier as a base, and threatened to take action if this state of affairs persisted; and on the 9th August the International Commission decided (again by a majority) that the continued use of the port of Tangier by Spanish warships would be contrary to the Statute of Tangier—a decision which was accepted by the Spanish Government without demur. At the same time the International Commission decided to recognize the validity of passports granted by the authorities in control of the Spanish Zone of Morocco, and to place no special restrictions on the movement of travellers and goods between Tangier and the Spanish Zone. These decisions averted the danger of an attack on Tangier, though they laid the International Commission open to the criticism of showing partiality towards the Spanish Nationalists.

² See footnote on p. 127, above.

colleagues only a few days to decide against this course.¹ At a meeting of the Council of Ministers on the 25th July² it was decided to prohibit the export to Spain of all war material (excluding, however, commercial aircraft which had been ordered before the 18th July); and on the 30th July MM. Blum and Delbos gave a formal assurance to the Foreign Affairs Commissions of the Senate and the Chamber that there was no truth in reports that military aeroplanes and munitions were being sent across the Spanish frontier.

On the 30th July, however, the suspicion that the 'Fascist' Powers were supplying war material to the Spanish Nationalists received definite confirmation. On that day three Italian aeroplanes made forced landings in Algeria; the occupants of two of them were either killed or injured, but the crew of the third was unhurt and the men were taken into custody by the French authorities. The Italian Government promptly denied any responsibility for the despatch of these aeroplanes, but official French investigations were said to have proved that the machines had belonged to the Italian Air Force up to the 20th July.³ It was also reported that some members of the crews had been recruited from the Air Force as early as the 15th July.

With this definite proof of foreign intervention on behalf of the Spanish Nationalists before their eyes, Monsieur Blum and his colleagues came to the conclusion that, if the danger of a general ideological war was to be averted and the trouble confined within the frontiers of Spain, something more was required than a unilateral decision on their part to withhold supplies from one party to the conflict. They realized, indeed, that in view of the Republican sympathies of their supporters it would be impossible for them to implement their own decision not to send supplies to Spain unless some check could be imposed on the flow of foreign munitions to the Spanish Nationalists; and they hoped that, if Italy was faced with a choice between giving an undertaking not to intervene in Spain and seeing her own assistance to the Nationalists counterbalanced and perhaps exceeded by French (and probably also Russian) assistance to the Spanish Government, she would choose the former alternative—

¹ For a discussion of the motives which governed the French decision see pp. 139 *seqq.*, above.

² See also p. 141, above.

³ The aeroplanes had no identification marks and had recently been repainted, but the Italian national colours were visible through the fresh coat of paint. They carried no bombs but were otherwise fully armed. Their destination was believed to have been Nador, near Melilla, where General Franco had his headquarters at that time, and where, according to a report published in the French Press, fourteen Italian aeroplanes arrived safely on the following day.

even though that choice might mean abandoning hope of the speedy establishment of a Fascist régime in Spain—rather than run the risk of a vast extension of the scope of the hostilities. Even if Italy was prepared to face the danger that an unrestricted competition in sending supplies to Spain might lead to a European war, it might be hoped that she would be influenced by the strictly practical consideration that assistance to the Nationalists and assistance to the Spanish Government might well cancel one another out; for if either party in Spain was able to obtain supplies freely from its foreign sympathizers, the strength of both parties might be greatly increased without sufficient alteration in the balance of forces to give one side or the other a decided advantage.

On the 1st August, accordingly, the French Council of Ministers decided to make an immediate appeal to Italy and also to Great Britain (the other Great Power with a direct interest in the situation in the Mediterranean) for 'the rapid adoption and rigid observance of an agreed arrangement for non-intervention in Spain'. Telegrams in this sense were despatched on the same day to Rome and to London. At the same time, an official *communiqué* made it known that, pending the conclusion of such an agreement and in view of the fact that war supplies were reaching the Nationalists from foreign countries, the French Government felt obliged to reserve the right to revise their own decision not to send supplies to the Spanish Government.

The British Government's response to this French *démarche* was prompt and favourable. In a note of the 4th August they declared that they were willing to take part in a collective declaration of absolute neutrality towards the Spanish conflict, but they suggested that the agreement ought not to be confined to the Mediterranean Powers but ought to include at any rate the three other states—Germany, the U.S.S.R. and Portugal—which were specially interested in the victory of one party or the other in Spain. The French Government accepted and acted upon this advice at once. It appears, indeed, that they had already approached the German Government and the Belgian Government before they received the British note, and their diplomatic representatives in Moscow and Lisbon were promptly instructed to take similar steps. The decision to extend the negotiations still further followed almost immediately, and invitations to join in a declaration of non-intervention in Spain were ultimately given to all the states of Europe. In the hope of speeding up the negotiations, the French Government circulated the draft text of a declaration on the 6th August. This provided for a formal

renunciation of intervention, direct or indirect, in the Spanish civil war, and laid it down that the export to Spain of all war material, including aircraft of all kinds and not excepting material which had been ordered before the civil war began, should be prohibited by the signatories, and that there should be an exchange of information regarding the measures taken by the various Governments to put this prohibition into effect. In order fully to implement their own proposals, the French Government announced on the 8th August that the arms embargo which had been decided upon on the 25th July would cover commercial as well as military aircraft. The prohibition of export of war material from France to Spain was put into effect on the 9th August.¹ The French proposals were not rejected by any of the Governments approached, one and all, indeed, they declared themselves in sympathy with the principle of non-intervention. The announcement that a Government approved a suggestion in principle, however, was by no means equivalent in diplomatic language to an acceptance of concrete terms; and the 'Fascist' Powers now gave the first example of tactics which were to become unpleasantly familiar. By delaying their definitive acceptance or refusal of the proposals they protracted the negotiations without allowing them to break down, and laid themselves open to the suspicion that they were deliberately trying to gain time in the hope that the help which they were giving to the Nationalists might turn the scale in the latters' favour before a decision which might limit activities on their behalf had been taken.²

On the 5th August the French diplomatic representative in Moscow was informed that the Soviet Government were prepared to accept the principle of non-intervention in Spain, but that they considered it essential that Portugal should be a party to the agreement, and that foreign assistance to the rebels should cease immediately. Since these conditions were an essential part of the arrangements which the French Government hoped to bring about, they did not present a serious obstacle, and by the 10th August the Soviet Government had signified their approval of the draft text of an agreement which the French Government had forwarded to them. The attitude of

¹ The prohibition on transit of material through France did not become effective until the 8th September. See the report of the Secretary to the Non-Intervention Committee on the legislative measures taken by the various Governments to give effect to the Non-Intervention Agreement (British White Paper *Spain No. 2 (1936)* [Cmd. 5300]).

² By the second week of August the Spanish Nationalists had taken the offensive on several fronts (see pp. 53-5, above). The German and Italian Governments may have hoped that these attacks would soon prove decisive.

Italy, the next of the Great Powers to reply to the French *démarche*, was less favourable. A verbal reply was made on the 5th August and Italian ideas on the subject of non-intervention were set out in greater detail in a note which reached the Quai d'Orsay on the 11th August. Italy was declared to adhere in principle to the thesis of non-intervention, but the inquiries which the Italian Government made regarding the scope of the arrangements which the French Government had in view showed that the Italian conception of a non-intervention agreement might be difficult to reconcile with that of France. The Italian Government asked whether 'moral solidarity' with one of the parties to the agreement (as expressed in public demonstrations, press campaigns, subscriptions of money, enrolment of volunteers, &c.) did not 'constitute a noisy and dangerous form of intervention'; whether the proposed agreement was to have a universal character or not, and was to be binding on private individuals as well as on Governments; and what methods of control over the observance or non-observance of the undertaking not to intervene in Spain were contemplated.

In the light of recent history it was not unreasonable to suggest that the signing of an agreement or the giving of a pledge was not in itself an adequate guarantee that engagements entered into would be carried out, and if the establishment of some system of control over the execution of the proposed non-intervention agreement had not formed part of the original French proposals, the omission was no doubt to be explained by the need for haste (experience in the Disarmament Conference had shown that control over the carrying out of engagements was not a matter on which the Powers could readily agree). As for the other Italian suggestions, there was a strong suspicion in France that they were put forward in a deliberately obstructionist spirit. 'Moral solidarity' with one of the parties to the dispute was undoubtedly being displayed in Russia, where popular demonstrations and press campaigns in favour of the Spanish Government were being supplemented by a levy on wages, by means of which considerable sums of money were being raised for despatch to Madrid.¹ In France, also, there were public demonstrations of sympathy with the Spanish Republicans, in the form of Press articles, meetings, and the collection of subscriptions,² and in addition volunteers were crossing the frontier, in small groups or individually, to offer their services to the Spanish Government.³ These activities

¹ See p. 198, above.

² See pp. 142 *segg.*, above.

³ On the 1st August, simultaneously with the decision to suggest the conclusion of a non-intervention agreement, the French Minister for the Interior

might well embarrass a Government which was striving after the attainment of an agreement for general non-intervention; but at the same time it was undeniable that it would be extremely difficult for the Government of a democratic country, where the liberty of the individual was still respected, to take effective steps to prevent manifestations of this kind. The Governments of countries where the Press was strictly controlled, and where individuals were not free to express their views by word or by deed, laboured under no such difficulties; and, since the Italian Government could not fail to be aware of this difference between a democratic and a dictatorial régime, their suggestions for enlarging the scope of the Non-Intervention Agreement appeared in French eyes as an attempt to obstruct the negotiations. In the French view the most urgent problem at the moment was to check the flow of foreign arms and munitions into Spain, and it was felt that an early agreement on this matter would be impossible unless the scope of the discussions was strictly limited. This view was justified by the difficulties which were encountered at a later stage when the question of volunteers came before the Non-Intervention Committee¹.

The Italian reply to the French proposals was therefore not of a nature to encourage the hope of a successful outcome of the negotiations at an early date, and the prospect was also overshadowed by the reaction in Germany and Italy to the treatment of German and Italian nationals in Catalonia. The news of the murder of Germans and Italians in Barcelona, which was received in the first week of August,² evoked an indignant outcry in the Press as well as strong official protests. In the second week of August Germany was provided with another grievance against the Spanish Government. Six Lufthansa air-liners which had been engaged in transporting refugees to Alicante were seized, and although five were released after a protest on the 12th August, the sixth, which had made a forced landing, was detained. It appeared not improbable that Germany and Italy would refuse to accept any arrangement which might hamper their freedom to intervene in Spain until they had settled these incidents to their satisfaction.

The German and Italian Press, moreover, was making the most of all the information and rumours at its disposal which could be issued instructions which were designed to prevent the departure for Spain of groups of volunteers or of individuals carrying arms, but there was no official restriction upon unarmed individuals who desired to offer their services to one or other of the contending parties in Spain.

¹ See pp. 274 *seqq.*, below.

² See also p. 230, above.

interpreted to mean that France and Russia, and even Great Britain,¹ were intervening on behalf of the Spanish Government, while the same Press was maintaining complete silence on the subject of help to the Nationalists. After the incident of the Italian aeroplanes which came down in Algeria, it was only the exact extent of Italian intervention that was a matter for doubt in other countries, and circumstantial reports, which received wide publicity abroad, also appeared to implicate Germany.² On the 9th August the German *charge d'affaires* in London gave the British Government a formal assurance that no war material was being sent or would be sent to the Spanish Nationalists from Germany, and that German warships in Spanish waters would not take any action which could be interpreted as showing sympathy with, or giving support to, the Nationalists.³ Freiherr von Neurath was also said to have assured the French Ambassador, when the latter broached the subject of non-intervention, that Germany's policy towards Spain was one of strict neutrality.

The German Foreign Minister's first response to the French proposal was said to have been favourable, but in the subsequent diplomatic conversations in Berlin the German attitude became stiffer. The German spokesmen laid stress on the importance of including among the signatories of the agreement all countries with armament or aircraft industries, and they also followed the Italian lead by expressing a desire that the agreement should cover the departure of volunteers.

¹ A good deal of publicity was given to the fact that the British system of export licences for war material, which had been used since the beginning of the war to prevent the export of munitions to Spain, did not cover commercial aircraft. Though a certain number of civil aeroplanes did undoubtedly leave England for Spain during the first weeks of the war, the charge of partiality would hardly lie, since both sides were supplied. For instance, of six air-liners which were said to have left English airports for Spain on the 15th August, four were destined for the Nationalists and two for the Government.

² There were rumours, for instance, that the *Deutschland* had landed bombs at Ceuta early in August, and that a liner carrying aeroplanes had left Hamburg for Spain. The report that the *Kamerun* unloaded munitions towards the end of August at Lisbon is referred to below (p. 243, footnote 1). It was generally believed that both German and Italian aircraft took part in the work of transporting troops by air from Morocco to Spain. According to Press reports, 14,000 men (70 per cent. of them Moors) had been carried by air from Ceuta by the second week of September (see also p. 52, above). Artillery and ammunition were also said to have been transported by this means.

³ This part of the German assurance was given in response to a report that the *Deutschland* had visited Ceuta and Algeciras and that the Admiral in command of the German naval forces had called upon General Franco at Tatwān.

The last of the Governments whose adherence to the agreement was considered essential also declared that they were prepared in principle to give favourable consideration to the French proposals but raised obstacles in practice. It was recognized in Paris and in London that the Portuguese Government (whose political complexion naturally inclined them to hope for General Franco's speedy triumph) were placed in a position of special difficulty by events in Spain; and in the diplomatic negotiations in Lisbon—in which both British and French representatives took part—sympathetic consideration was given to the Portuguese Government's plea for safeguards against the repercussions upon Portugal if the policy of non-intervention were to result in the victory of the Spanish Government's forces, with the sequel (which to Portuguese eyes appeared to be inevitable) of a period of anarchy in Spain.¹ French and British sympathy with Portugal's case, however, was put to a considerable strain when this small state appeared to be following the example set by the 'Fascist' Great Powers and deliberately trying to protract the negotiations.

By the middle of August the French Government had received full support for their proposal for a Non-Intervention Agreement from the British Government (who had followed up their note of the 4th August by promptly signifying approval of the draft text of the 6th August), but Russia was the only other state, within the group whose adherence was considered essential, which had yet returned a definitely favourable reply. The diplomatic representatives of France and Great Britain in Rome, Berlin and Lisbon were still actively engaged in endeavouring to overcome the various difficulties which had been raised—in particular, to convince the Italian Government that the question of 'moral solidarity' could most suitably be discussed after and not before an agreement on the prohibition of war material had been reached—but their efforts had not yet been crowned with success. A favourable response had, however, been made by several of the smaller European states, and in some cases Governments were already taking steps to prevent the export of war material to Spain.² Moreover, an assurance of moral support had come from Washington, and this was clearly of great importance. The United States Government had not been approached directly

¹ See also p. 205, above.

² An embargo on munitions exports to Spain was put into force by the Netherlands, Poland and Sweden on the 11th August, and on the 14th August the Swiss Federal Council adopted a decree prohibiting not only the export of arms to Spain but also the departure of volunteers and the despatch of funds.

on the subject of non-intervention (if only for the sake of speed, it had been judged advisable to confine the negotiations to the European Powers), but the attitude of the Administration towards the Spanish conflict had been defined on the 11th August in terms which left no doubt that the principle of non-intervention had their approval.¹

Meanwhile the French Government were being subjected to considerable pressure from many of their supporters, who were growing increasingly restive under the influence of circumstantial reports of Italian and German aid to the Nationalists, and who felt that in these circumstances the Government's policy of withholding supplies from the Spanish Government could not be justified.² In the hope that a demonstration of Anglo-French unity might carry weight with the Powers which were still hanging back, the British Government consented to take the definite step of formally pledging themselves to follow a policy of non-intervention; and on the 15th August declarations were exchanged in Paris by which the French and British Governments placed on record their decision 'to abstain rigorously from all intervention, direct or indirect, in the internal affairs' of Spain, and announced that they intended to prohibit 'the export, direct or indirect, the re-export and the transit³ to any destination in Spain, the Spanish possessions or the Spanish Zone of Morocco, of all arms, munitions and materials of war, as well as of all aircraft, complete or in parts, and of all warships'. This prohibition was expressly declared to apply to contracts in process of execution. The two Governments further announced their intention of keeping other Governments which entered into similar undertakings informed in regard to the measures which they took to give effect to the declaration. Finally, they pledged themselves to put these measures into force as soon as the Governments of Germany, Italy, the U.S.S.R. and Portugal had adhered to the declaration.

It has been seen that the French Government had already taken the necessary measures to prevent the export of war material and aircraft to Spain. In a statement issued by the Foreign Office in

¹ See p. 215, above

² This view was naturally shared by the Spanish Government themselves, who, before the middle of August, had entered the first of many protests against the policy of non-intervention—or rather against what they considered to be its one-sided application.

³ There was a reservation in the British declaration on the subject of re-export and transit, which could not, owing to 'practical difficulties', be prohibited in a 'completely efficacious manner'. It was pointed out that it was improbable in any case that the problem of transit would arise in a serious form in Great Britain.

London on the 15th August, attention was drawn to the fact that no licences for the export of war material to Spain had been issued since the war began, and British subjects were warned of the serious consequences of running counter to the Government's policy of non-intervention.

It should be realized that the maintenance of a strict and impartial attitude of non-intervention is essential if the unhappy events in Spain are to be prevented from having serious repercussions elsewhere. British subjects who assist either side in Spain by land, sea or air, are not only running grave risks for themselves, but are rendering it more difficult to arrive at the proposed agreement. They must not expect to receive any assistance or support whatever in difficulties which they may meet with during such enterprises, which run counter to the objects which H.M. Government are seeking to attain.

As a proof of good faith, the British Government did not wait to take the measures which they had promised until the condition of reciprocity which was laid down in the declaration of the 15th August had been fulfilled. As from the 19th August the prohibition of export of war material to Spain was made applicable to all categories covered by the declaration of the 15th August, and existing licences for export to Spain were revoked. This step closed the gaps which the system of withholding new licences for war material had left open, and thenceforth the despatch of commercial aeroplanes from Great Britain to Spain was a punishable offence.

Meanwhile, the demonstration of Anglo-French solidarity on the 15th August had already borne fruit. On the 17th August the German Government had notified the French Government that they were willing to accept the terms laid down in the Anglo-French declaration and would enforce the prohibition of export of war materials to Spain as soon as two conditions had been fulfilled. These conditions were: (a) that the Lufthansa machine which was still held by the Spanish Government must be returned;¹ and (b) that the provisions must be accepted by the Governments of other arms-producing states, and must be made binding upon individuals as well as upon Governments. In addition the German Government expressed the opinion that it was 'eminently desirable that the interested Governments should extend the measures which they take to cover the departure from their territory of volunteers'.

Four days later, on the 21st August, the intensive diplomatic

¹ The German Government had already obtained substantial satisfaction in respect of their other demands upon the Spanish Government. They had secured the release of all German nationals detained in Spain, and the promise of an inquiry into the murder of Germans at Barcelona.

activity which had been going on in Rome during the past three weeks was brought to a successful conclusion. The Italian Government had at length allowed themselves to be persuaded not to make the prohibition of 'moral solidarity' an essential condition for their acceptance of an agreement to forbid the supply of war materials to Spain, and they adhered to the Anglo-French declaration on the same terms as Great Britain and France themselves—that is, the arms embargo was to be put into force as soon as the five other specially interested Governments had also adhered. The question of 'moral solidarity' was dealt with by placing it on record that, in the Italian Government's view, the promise to abstain from 'indirect intervention' meant that the collection of public subscriptions and the enrolment of volunteers would not be permitted in the territory of Governments which were parties to the agreement. The Italian note also expressed the opinion that the inclusion of other arms-providing countries in the arrangement 'seemed essential', but, unlike the German Government,¹ they did not make this a condition of putting the declaration into force.

On the 21st August, also, the Portuguese Government declared in writing that they accepted the undertakings not to intervene in the Spanish conflict and to prohibit the export, re-export or transit (the two latter were of course the matter of vital importance in the case of Portugal) of war material to Spain as soon as the other essential adherences had been notified. At the same time, the Government at Lisbon hedged their acceptance about with so many reservations that they retained very considerable freedom of action. The Portuguese note of the 21st August enumerated a number of cases in which the Government might be called upon to take action which would not be considered as intervention on their interpretation. Their reservations included the defence of public order, security and the territorial integrity of Portugal; defence against any socially subversive régime which might be established in Spain; mediation between the parties to the conflict; the maintenance of relations with the authorities exercising *de facto* government or administration in Spanish territory; and the recognition of the belligerent rights of the forces engaged in conflict or of a new Government. Moreover, in Lisbon, as in Rome, 'intervention, direct or indirect', was held to cover the enlistment of volunteers and the collection or despatch of

¹ The German note referred to the 'Governments of other states' possessing considerable arms industries, and this might be taken to mean that they desired the inclusion of non-European states; but the Italian note referred only to 'other states in Europe'.

subscriptions, but the Portuguese Government went further than the Italian Government had gone when they declared that they would consider themselves freed from their obligations if any of the Governments which adhered to the agreement were to transgress in either of these respects. In regard to the exchange of information, the Portuguese Government undertook not only to notify the other signatories of the measures which they themselves put into force, but also to hand on any adequately authenticated information relating to the export or transit of war material in violation of the agreement which they might receive through the Spanish Government or the Junta of National Defence. They suggested at the same time that it would be well to study the possibility of setting up a more efficacious system of control over the arms traffic to Spain.

On the 23rd August the Government of the U.S.S.R. notified the French Government of their formal adherence to the declaration on the usual condition of reciprocity. The Russian acceptance placed the German Government in the position of being the only one of the six specially interested Governments which had not undertaken to prohibit the export of war material to Spain as soon as the other five had signified their willingness to do likewise. The German Government had made their acceptance conditional on a settlement of the question of the detained air-liner; and on the 23rd August negotiations with the Spanish Government on this question had not yet been concluded. Moreover, since the delivery of the German note of the 17th August another incident had occurred which threatened to make the German attitude even stiffer. On the 18th August the German merchant ship *Kamerun* had been stopped by three shots across her bows and searched by Spanish Government warships off Cádiz, and had then been ordered to proceed to Gibraltar without calling at a Spanish port. According to the Spanish version, the *Kamerun* was in territorial waters at the time when she was stopped and was carrying oil; the German version was that the ship was outside the three-mile limit¹ and was not carrying war material of any

¹ There had already been cases of German ships being detained inside the three-mile limit, and these had not been made the subject of an official protest. A protest had, however, been made after an incident which had occurred at the beginning of August, when several shells from a Spanish destroyer had fallen near a German merchant-ship. Incidents in which foreign ships were involved were of fairly frequent occurrence from the beginning of the war, though interference with foreign shipping did not assume serious proportions until a later stage (see pp. 305 *seqq.*, below). In the second week of August, for instance, shells from the shore batteries at Barcelona fell near a French and a British warship in the harbour, and on the 23rd August a British merchant

kind.¹ Strong protests were at once made by the commander of the German naval forces in Spanish waters and by the *charge d'affaires* at Madrid, and the Spanish Government were notified that German warships were being ordered to protect German merchant ships against such interference. In these circumstances, it appeared to be highly probable that the German Government would insist that their representations must receive a satisfactory reply before they would complete the Non-Intervention Agreement by giving their formal adherence.

On the 24th August, however, the German Government informed the French Government that, in view of the fact that the other interested Governments had now accepted the French proposals, they themselves would waive the condition that their negotiations over the Lufthansa machine must first be concluded, and would put into force immediately the measures for which the declaration provided. This gesture from Berlin would have produced a greater effect if it had not been made simultaneously with the announcement of the introduction of a two-years' period of compulsory military service in Germany—a step which was one of the outstanding events in the field of competitive rearmament during the year 1936.² Even with this accompaniment, the completion of the Non-Intervention Agreement by the adherence of Berlin did much to relieve international tension.

It has been seen that France and Great Britain had taken measures to put the Non-Intervention Agreement into force before the agreement had actually been completed, and the necessary legislative measures were taken by the other four specially interested countries between the 24th and the 28th August. A decree was issued in Germany on the 24th August; Portugal followed suit on the 27th; and Italy and the U.S.S.R. on the 28th. By this time almost all the lesser European states which had been approached had also notified their adherence—several of them with the reservation that their acceptance of the French proposals must not be taken as a precedent

ship was stopped by a Spanish Government cruiser outside territorial waters. On both these occasions protests elicited prompt apologies from Madrid, and in the second case a promise that there should be no further interference with British shipping outside territorial waters. In another case, however—that of a United States destroyer on which an unidentified aeroplane attempted to drop bombs at the end of August—both the Spanish Government and the Nationalists denied all knowledge or responsibility.

¹ *The News Chronicle* of London in its issue of the 25th August published a report from a special correspondent at Lisbon who declared that he had seen the *Kamerun* and another German ship unloading arms and oil at that port.

² See the *Survey for 1936*, Part I, section (iii).

which might be invoked on a subsequent occasion when the question of supplying munitions to a legally constituted Government engaged in combating rebels might arise. The twenty-one Governments which ultimately accepted the Non-Intervention Agreement,¹ in addition to the six specially interested Powers, were: Albania, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Greece, Hungary, the Irish Free State, Jugoslavia, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Rumania, Sweden and Turkey. It will be noticed that the only European state which was absent from the list was Switzerland, and the Swiss Federal Government had informed the French Government that, while 'they felt precluded by the permanent neutrality of the Swiss Confederation from participating in the suggested joint declaration', they had on their own initiative 'taken certain measures designed to secure the same object'.²

As soon as the successful conclusion of the first phase of the non-intervention negotiations had been ensured by the adherence of Germany to the agreement, the French Government had taken a further step. They had invited the Powers to take part in further discussions, and had suggested that the most convenient method of arranging for the exchange of information, which was an integral part of their plan, might be the establishment of a committee in London, composed of representatives of all the parties to the agreement. By this means the Governments could readily keep one another informed of the measures which they were taking in fulfilment of their pledge of non-intervention, and they could also consider the wider aspects of non-intervention which were not covered by the embargo on arms and which the Governments of Italy, Germany and Portugal had wished to include within the scope of the agreement. Eleven Governments (including that of Italy) had accepted the invitation to serve on the Non-Intervention Committee in London before the end of August, and Russia was among the states which accepted during the first few days of September. Germany, whose delay in replying caused some uneasiness, announced on the 5th September that she would be represented on the Committee, and Portugal then remained the only state whose attendance was of the first importance which had not consented to serve. The anxiety of the French and British Govern-

¹ The last acceptance—that of Estonia—was notified to the French Government on the 3rd September.

² Quoted from the report of the Secretary to the Non-Intervention Committee on the legislative measures taken by the various Governments (*Cmd. 5300*, p. 7). The Swiss decree had been issued on the 14th August (see p. 238, footnote 2, above).

ments to obtain a favourable reply from Portugal was all the greater because of the reports which were current at the end of August regarding the transport of munitions through Portugal, and other activities on behalf of the Spanish Nationalists of which Lisbon was said to be the centre. Even if these reports were greatly exaggerated, it was obvious that the participation of Portugal was essential to the success of the non-intervention scheme—if only because the Governments of Germany and Italy had not given any undertaking not to send war material to Portugal. The delay in accepting the French proposals for a Non-Intervention Agreement, and the reservations which accompanied Portugal's final acceptance,¹ had shown how reluctant Dr. Salazar's Government were to tie their hands in any way, and it was said that considerable diplomatic pressure from France and Great Britain had been needed to secure the issue in Lisbon, on the 27th August, of the decree which placed an embargo on the export or transit of war material to Spain. By the beginning of September the Portuguese Government had indicated that they might agree to be represented on the Non-Intervention Committee if its scope and competence were more clearly defined, and after the German acceptance had been received it was decided to summon the first meeting of the Committee on the 9th September, in the hope that by that time French and British influence in Lisbon would have elicited a definite acceptance. On the 8th September, however, the Portuguese Government informed the French Government that they did not intend to be represented at the Committee meeting on the following day, but would defer their decision until it became clearer what powers the new organization would possess.² Portugal was therefore an absentee when the first meeting of the Non-Intervention Committee took place on the 9th September, and it was not until the end of September that the combined influence of France and Great Britain, exercised not only through diplomatic channels but also through the medium of conversations at Geneva between Mr. Eden and the Portuguese Foreign Minister, was successful in inducing the Portuguese Government to waive their objections to representation on the Non-Intervention Committee. Even then, they insisted on maintaining the reservations which they had made at the time of accepting the Non-Intervention Agreement.

¹ See pp. 241–2, above.

² The Portuguese Government's reluctance to take a step which might result in further restrictions on their freedom of action was probably attributable, in part at any rate, to a mutiny which had broken out on the morning of the 8th September on two of their warships in Lisbon harbour (see p. 206, above).

(c) THE EXAMINATION OF ALLEGED BREACHES OF THE NON-INTERVENTION AGREEMENT BY THE LONDON COMMITTEE AND THE DISCUSSION OF A PLAN OF CONTROL (SEPTEMBER–NOVEMBER 1936)

The first meeting of the Non-Intervention Committee in London on the 9th September was attended by the representatives of all the countries, save Portugal, which had accepted the Non-Intervention Agreement. The Committee elected as its chairman Mr. W. S. Morrison, the Financial Secretary to the British Treasury, who had presided over an inter-departmental committee which had been examining measures for making the arms embargo effective in Great Britain. Before the end of September, however, Mr. Morrison's place as chairman had been taken by Lord Plymouth, one of the Under-Secretaries of State for Foreign Affairs, and he continued to preside over the discussions throughout the period under review in this volume, save for a few occasions on which the issues at stake were particularly crucial and it was felt to be desirable that the British Foreign Minister himself should take the chair.¹ At the second meeting of the Committee, on the 14th September, a sub-committee was appointed 'to assist the chairman in the day-to-day work of the Committee'. This sub-committee consisted of the representatives of Belgium, Czechoslovakia and Sweden in addition to those of the six states—France, Great Britain, Germany, Italy, the U.S.S.R. and Portugal²—whose adherence to the Non-Intervention Agreement had been required in order to bring the agreement into operation.

Although the Non-Intervention Committee held three meetings before the Portuguese Government agreed to take part in the Committee's work, it was recognized that the absence of one of the specially interested states made it impossible to tackle the problems before the Committee in earnest. The discussions during September therefore turned principally on questions of procedure. It was decided, for instance, that the proceedings at the meetings should be treated as strictly confidential subject to the issue of an agreed *communiqué* at the conclusion of each meeting (this resolution did not prevent the Press of the various countries from publishing full accounts of the frequently very heated discussions which took place behind the closed doors, and the fact that such reports had no official sanction did little to diminish their influence upon public opinion). It was also decided that it was necessary, in order to provide a basis for the Committee's work, to collect as rapidly as possible the information

¹ See pp. 367 *segg.*, below.

² Portugal took her place upon the sub-committee as soon as she had agreed to serve upon the main committee.

which the signatories of the Non-Intervention Agreement had undertaken to supply regarding the measures which they took to put the Agreement into force. The task of preparing a dossier containing this essential information was entrusted to the Secretary of the Committee, Mr. Francis Hemming¹ At the third meeting on the 21st September it was decided that allegations of breaches of the Non-Intervention Agreement should be examined by the Committee, but only if they were sponsored by one of the states represented on the Committee.

This preliminary period, which was brought to an end by the attendance of a Portuguese representative at the fourth meeting of the Committee on the 28th September, was followed by a period of five or six weeks during which charges and counter-charges of intervention on behalf of one or other of the parties to the Spanish conflict were the subject of violent Press campaigns and of long and stormy but inconclusive debates in the Non-Intervention Committee and its sub-committee.

The interchange of accusations of intervention was opened by the Spanish Government at Geneva. The Spanish situation was not on the agenda either of the ninety-fourth meeting of the League Council, which began on the 18th September, or of the seventeenth session of the Assembly, which began on the 21st; but it naturally provided one of the principal topics of discussion in those informal conversations between statesmen for which Council and Assembly meetings at Geneva afforded ample opportunity. Señor Álvarez del Vayo, who was representing the Spanish Government at Geneva in his capacity as Foreign Minister, took advantage of the presence of the French and British Foreign Ministers at Geneva to explain in detail his Government's objections to a system under which (according to their version) the principles of non-intervention were being observed by Governments friendly to Madrid and disregarded by Governments friendly to Burgos. Señor Álvarez del Vayo was said to have expressed special indignation at the attitude of Portugal, whom he accused of giving open support to the Nationalists. In his speech before the Assembly on the 25th September, however, Señor Álvarez del Vayo showed greater restraint—partly, perhaps, because the President of the Assembly, Señor Saavedra Lamas of Argentina, was known to feel sympathy with the Spanish Nationalist cause, and he

¹ Mr. Hemming completed his report on 'the legislative and other measures taken by the participating Governments to give effect to the Agreement regarding non-intervention in Spain' on the 3rd November, 1936. It was published as the British White Paper *Spain No. 2, 1936 (Cmnd. 5300)*.

would therefore have been likely to rule the Spanish delegate out of order if he had made detailed accusations against particular states. Señor Álvarez del Vayo contented himself with a statement in general terms to the effect that non-intervention was in practice intervention against the Government, and with an appeal to his hearers to consider the implications of a policy which allowed subversive elements to receive foreign help.¹ Most of the other speakers who addressed the Assembly showed little inclination to embark upon a discussion of the Spanish problem, but brief references to the Non-Intervention Agreement were made by Monsieur Delbos, Monsieur Litvinov and Senhor Monteiro, the Portuguese Foreign Minister.

The Spanish Government's next move was the publication of documents presenting evidence in support of their accusations against the 'Fascist' Powers and Portugal.² On the 30th September they circulated to all the delegations at Geneva and to the Press, copies of notes which they had addressed to various Governments during recent weeks—including notes which they had sent to the French Government in August protesting against that Government's decision not to supply them with arms, and notes, dated the 15th September, to the Governments of Germany, Italy and Portugal on the subject of help to the Nationalists. In these notes to the Governments which were in sympathy with the Nationalists the Spanish Government gave particulars, for instance, regarding German and Italian aeroplanes belonging to the Nationalist forces which had fallen into their hands, and they also gave a description of the unloading of war material at Lisbon from German ships. Further details of the same kind were set out in a memorandum which was published on the 3rd October. A considerable proportion of the evidence which the Spanish Government produced, related to incidents which had taken place during the first weeks of the civil war, and their indictment of the 'Fascist' Powers and Portugal was therefore based on the latters' breach of the rule of international law that foreign support must not be given to insurgents, rather than on their disregard of their subsequent specific pledge not to send supplies to Spain.

Events which had taken place before the Non-Intervention Agree-

¹ The only speaker in the Assembly who gave whole-hearted support to the Spanish Government was the Mexican delegate. He was enunciating a policy which his Government followed consistently throughout the period under review. (See pp. 213–14, above.)

² The Spanish Government decided to publish these documents themselves, after a suggestion that they should be issued as League papers had been rejected by the Secretary-General of the League on the ground that they referred to questions which were not on the agenda of the Council or the Assembly.

ment came into force were not the direct concern of the Non-Intervention Committee in London; but the Spanish documents also contained particulars of incidents which were alleged to have taken place since the end of August, and on the 6th October the documents were brought officially to the notice of the London Committee by the British Government and a meeting to consider them was summoned for the 9th October. Simultaneously, the Government of the U.S.S.R. entered the lists in support of the Spanish Government's charges. The Soviet Government selected Portugal as their principal target for attack. In a note of the 6th October they accused the Portuguese Government of allowing their territory to be used as a base of operations by the Nationalists, and suggested that the Non-Intervention Committee should consider the despatch of a Commission of Investigation to report on conditions on the Spanish-Portuguese frontier. Next day they sent a further note to the Chairman of the Non-Intervention Committee expressing the fear that repeated violations of the Non-Intervention Agreement had already made the agreement 'virtually non-existent'; declaring that they could in no case agree 'to turn the agreement into a screen shielding the military aid given to the rebels by some of the participants'; and threatening to consider themselves released from their obligations if violations of the agreement were not immediately stopped.

The meeting of the Non-Intervention Committee on the 9th October which had before it the Spanish documents and the Russian threat to withdraw lasted for nearly seven hours, and according to Press reports the discussions were remarkable for the undiplomatic vigour of the language that was used (the exchange of invective between the Italian and the Russian representatives was said to have been especially violent). This departure from the general practice in international gatherings came to be taken as a matter of course at meetings of the Non-Intervention Committee, and it is possible that the lack of restraint which was shown in this forum may even have served a useful purpose by providing an outlet for feelings which might otherwise have found a more dangerous form of expression. At all events, the meeting of the 9th October came to an end without any fulfilment of prognostications of the imminent break-down of the non-intervention policy—thus affording the first of many examples of the remarkable capacity of the apparently fragile structure of non-intervention for surviving shocks that had been expected to prove fatal. The Portuguese delegate left the meeting when the Russian suggestion for the supervision of the Spanish-Portuguese frontier was mentioned—on the ground that he could not discuss that question

without further instructions from his Government—but he made it clear that he was not withdrawing from all participation in the Committee's work.¹ The Russian delegate also refrained from carrying out his Government's threat to withdraw, even though the Russian demand for immediate action to put an end to violations of the agreement had hardly been met by the Committee's decision to postpone consideration of the Spanish Government's charges against the German, Italian and Portuguese Governments until those Governments had had time to consider the accusations in detail and present their observations on them.

The Soviet Government, however, returned to the attack on the 12th October, when Monsieur Maisky, their Ambassador in London, presented a note to the Chairman of the Non-Intervention Committee asking that the Committee should be summoned again at an early date to consider a proposal for the establishment of a system of control by French and British ships at Portuguese ports. Lord Plymouth refused to accede to this request, on the ground that the Soviet Government had not produced any new evidence against Portugal which required examination. The evidence at the British Government's disposal, indeed, led them to believe that the Portuguese Government had put a stop to the transit of war material across their territory since the Non-Intervention Agreement had come into force; and, on the other hand, a good deal of resentment was felt in both Paris and London against the action of the Soviet Government in making a demonstration which was certainly not likely to promote the co-operation between Russia and the 'Fascist' Powers which was essential if the work of the Non-Intervention Committee was not to be brought to a standstill. Moreover, Russia was taking it upon herself to accuse Portugal at a moment when, by her own acts, she was laying herself open to similar charges; for evidence was accumulating, as the Nationalist forces approached Madrid, that not only money and food-stuffs but also supplies of war material were reaching the Spanish Government from Russia on a scale comparable to that of German and Italian supplies to the Nationalists, and that the Republicans were also benefiting from Russian assistance in such matters as the organization of foreign volunteers.² The Soviet Government could

¹ In a note of the 27th October the Portuguese Government claimed that they would be justified in withdrawing at any time from the Committee on the ground that the British Government had violated the Committee's rules of procedure by failing to verify the accuracy of the Spanish Government's charges before they laid them before the Committee. This Portuguese threat to withdraw was not, however, carried into effect.

² Mr. Eden declared in the House of Commons at Westminster on the 16th

plead, of course, that under the generally accepted rules of international law it was an offence to supply war material to an insurgent force, but perfectly legitimate to supply a properly constituted Government; but this distinction did not alter the fact that since the Non-Intervention Agreement had come into force a state which supplied the legitimate Spanish Government was no less guilty of a breach of its international engagements than a state which supplied the insurgent Nationalists.

The French Government used what influence they possessed in Moscow to induce the Soviet Government to withdraw their threat to leave the Non-Intervention Committee and resume complete freedom of action, but their efforts were only partially successful. At a meeting of the Committee on the 23rd October the Chairman read a letter which he had received from Monsieur Maisky, in which the Soviet Government expressed the opinion that the best way to end 'the privileged situation for the rebels' which had been created by violations of the agreement, would be to restore to the Spanish Government their right to purchase arms and to the states participating in the agreement their right to sell them. They declared that, in any case, they could not consider themselves 'bound by the agreement for non-intervention to any greater extent than any of the remaining participants'. This somewhat ambiguous statement presumably indicated that the Soviet Government were reluctant, when it came to the point, to take the responsibility for destroying the non-intervention scheme, but the other members of the Committee naturally felt that they would like more light on the question whether the Soviet Government did or did not still consider themselves bound by the Non-Intervention Agreement. Monsieur Maisky was persuaded to ask his Government for an interpretation of the declaration which he had made on the 23rd October, and at the next meeting of the Committee on the 28th October he made a further statement on the Russian attitude. This was to the effect that, until guarantees against the supply of war material to the Spanish Nationalists had been created

and an effective control over the strict fulfilment of the obligations regarding non-intervention established, those Governments who consider supplying the legitimate Spanish Government as conforming to international law, international order, and international justice are morally

November, 1936, in reply to a parliamentary question, that evidence of breaches of the Non-Intervention Agreement 'by no means' related 'to one side only'. On the 19th November, in the same place, he stated 'categorically that there are other Governments more to blame than either Germany or Italy'.

entitled not to consider themselves more bound by the agreement than those Governments who supply the rebels in contravention of the agreement.

This statement was taken to mean that a Russian representative would continue, for the time being at any rate, to take part in the work of the Non-Intervention Committee; but the other Powers were given plain warning that Russia would continue to supply the Government forces in Spain so long as she had reason to believe that the Nationalists were receiving supplies from abroad.

Meanwhile, the Governments who were under accusation of supplying the Nationalists had produced observations on the charges made against them in which they not only contested the validity of the evidence but passed over to the attack by producing evidence in their turn against Russia. The German observations reached the Chairman of the Non-Intervention Committee on the 21st October, and replies from Italy and Portugal were received a few days later. The accusation that Russia was intervening in Spain by means of the supply of munitions (it was alleged, for instance, that the foodships which were now arriving frequently at Spanish ports carried war material concealed beneath grain)¹ was supplemented by references to the Communist organization in Spain before the war² and to the activities of Monsieur Rosenberg, the Russian Ambassador in Madrid, who, it was declared, was the dominant influence in the Spanish Government's counsels.

The evidence for and against the various states who were accusing one another of infringing the terms of the Non-Intervention Agreement was examined by the Non-Intervention Committee and its sub-committee in a series of meetings during the last week of October and the first fortnight of November.³ The discussions were often extremely acrimonious, and they led to no positive result. Although it was not doubted in any quarter that the two parties in Spain were

¹ According to Press reports, at least a dozen Russian cargo steamers and tankers passed through the Black Sea Straits between the 1st and the 24th October.

² See p. 127 *n.*, above.

³ The documentation had been increased before the end of October by a reply from the Soviet Government to the charges made against them; by further notes from Germany, Italy and Portugal; and by a British note which was circulated on the 24th October and which gave particulars of infractions of the agreement of which the British Government had reliable evidence. Of the four instances referred to in the British note, three were Russian breaches of the agreement and one an Italian breach. The Russians were said to have landed munitions, tanks and lorries in Spain on three occasions during October, while Italy was charged with sending aeroplanes and munitions to Majorca on or about the 7th October.

still receiving very considerable supplies of war material from their respective backers, it was found to be impossible (or at any rate impolitic) to establish with certainty the facts relating to any particular incident. After a preliminary examination of the evidence, the defendant Governments were in certain instances asked to supply additional information, but in every case the Committee ultimately returned a verdict of not proven. By the end of October all the Governments represented on the Committee, apart from the Soviet Government, had accepted the view that it was impossible to prove that Germany, Italy and Portugal had infringed the Non-Intervention Agreement—either because of lack of evidence, or because the alleged incidents were shown to have taken place before the Non-Intervention Agreement had come into force, or because the Government concerned had succeeded in clearing itself of the charge. Russia was given a relatively clean sheet in the same way on the 10th November, and although certain cases of alleged Russian breaches of the agreement were reserved for further examination, the matter was apparently allowed to drop.

It was, indeed, abundantly clear by this time that the consideration of infractions of the Non-Intervention Agreement by the London Committee was doing nothing to check the supply of war materials to the two parties in Spain, and attention was already being concentrated on the possibility of setting up a system of supervision which might be expected at least to make the smuggling of munitions into Spain more difficult than it was in existing circumstances, even if it could not stop it altogether. At the meetings of the Committee in October the Soviet representative had repeatedly attempted to initiate a discussion on his Government's proposal that a control should be exercised over the frontiers of Portugal, but the Portuguese delegate had refused even to consider the possibility of a one-sided scheme of this kind, and his attitude evoked a good deal of sympathy. At the same time the Portuguese Government had themselves suggested, at an earlier stage, that some kind of supervision over the execution of the Non-Intervention Agreement would be desirable;¹ while the Italian Government had at first shown a tendency to make the establishment of a system of control a condition of their acceptance of the Non-Intervention Agreement.² It was to be presumed, therefore, that the 'Fascist' Powers and Portugal had no *a priori* objection to discussing a scheme which would be of general application; and at a meeting of the Chairman's Sub-Committee on the 24th October Lord Plymouth initiated an attempt to work out plans for

¹ See p. 242, above.

² See p. 235, above.

controlling all the channels by which supplies of war material might reach Spain.

During the next three weeks the Chairman's Sub-Committee was busily engaged in efforts to prepare a plan which would be acceptable to all the Governments represented on the Non-Intervention Committee. If a supervision of the execution of the Non-Intervention Agreement was to be made really effective it would clearly be necessary to control not only the land and sea routes to Spain but the air routes as well; but it was obvious that whatever the difficulties of controlling the traffic to Spain by land and by sea might be, they were nothing to the difficulties of controlling the traffic by air. An attempt was therefore made in the first place to devise a plan by which the arrival of goods in Spanish ports and the traffic across the French and Portuguese frontiers could be supervised. There were, of course, considerable technical difficulties to be overcome in the preparation of plans of this kind, but these would probably not have been sufficient to hinder progress very seriously if all the states concerned had been of one mind in desiring the application of an effective scheme of control over imports into Spain at the earliest possible moment. If there had been unanimity among the members of the Non-Intervention Committee on this point, however, there would have been no need for the scheme.

Taken at its face value, the insistence of Italy and Portugal on the one side and Russia on the other on the need for introducing effective control meant that either group of backers of the contending parties in Spain would be ready to forego the possibility of sending help to its own protégé if it could be sure of depriving the party to which it was opposed of the benefit of foreign assistance. With the best will in the world, however, it would clearly be difficult to devise any scheme of supervision which would be perfectly watertight, and while both sides no doubt hoped to be able to take advantage, themselves, of any loopholes in the system, they would not be able to prevent their opponents from making use of similar opportunities. The policy of the 'Fascist' Powers in these circumstances was again to play for time, in the expectation that they would be able to outstrip Russia in the competition in supplying assistance to the combatants in Spain during the next few weeks, and in the hope that any system of control which might be put into force thereafter would be efficacious enough to prevent Russia from making up this leeway. The Soviet Government, for their part, appear to have realized that it was in their interest that definite limits should be imposed as soon as possible upon

this competition, and they refrained from putting difficulties in the way of the adoption of a plan of control.

By the second week of November 1936 a plan for controlling land and sea traffic with Spain had taken shape. The plan as originally drafted provided for the posting of observers along the Spanish side of the land frontiers and also in Spanish ports, where they would supervise the unloading of cargoes and verify that they did not contain war material. This scheme could obviously only be carried out with the co-operation of both the Spanish Government and General Franco's administration; and it was therefore necessary to decide on the terms on which the contending parties were to be asked for their consent. The plan was examined at a meeting of the full Non-Intervention Committee on the 12th November, and in the early hours of the 13th a *communiqué* was published in which it was announced that the Committee had provisionally accepted the plan, subject to the incorporation into it of certain amendments and to the approval of the Governments represented on the Committee.

It appeared at first sight as though a definite step forward had been taken; but since the plan had to be approved by twenty-seven Governments, as well as by the two parties in Spain, there was still plenty of opportunity for the exercise of dilatory tactics. During the second half of November the Chairman's Sub-Committee continued to work on the plan, in the light of the observations received from Governments, and by the end of the month a stage had been reached at which it was possible, in the opinion of the Russian, French and British members of the sub-committee, to submit the plan for consideration to the contending parties in Spain. The German, Italian and Portuguese representatives, however, opposed the taking of this step until a scheme for controlling air traffic had also been prepared. It was clearly impossible to supervise the arrival of aircraft in Spain, and, in the opinion of experts who were consulted, an effective scheme of air control would have implied the supervision of the despatch of aircraft from all aerodromes in countries within a radius of 1,500 miles from the Spanish frontier. An organization on this scale would hardly have been practicable even if there had been any hope of inducing the Governments concerned to accept the presence of observers in their territory. Although the experts continued for some time to examine the possibility of air control, they were never able to devise a practicable scheme, and the attempt had ultimately to be abandoned.¹

¹ The lack of supervision over air traffic remained one of the most serious gaps in the system of control which was finally put into operation after a delay of several months (see pp. 292 *seqq.*, below).

Meanwhile the representatives of the 'Fascist' Powers had not carried their delaying tactics to the point of obstructing any further progress with the plan for supervising traffic by land and by sea. On the 2nd December the Non-Intervention Committee decided (with the Portuguese representative abstaining from voting) that an outline of the proposals should be submitted immediately to the Spanish Government and to the Nationalists. A certain delay was inevitable before the observations of the two parties in Spain on the proposals for supervision could be expected to reach the Committee, and the Committee turned its attention to the question, which had suddenly become urgent, of extending the scope of the Non-Intervention Agreement to cover the despatch of volunteers.¹

The attitude adopted by the 'Fascist' Powers during the discussion of the plans for controlling traffic with Spain in November had a manifest connexion with the situation in Spain itself, where the Nationalist forces were investing Madrid.² In the middle of November it looked as though the fall of the capital could not be long postponed, and the prospect of a decisive Nationalist victory naturally inclined General Franco's backers to play for time in London. The move which Italy and Germany made on the 18th November, however, was less easy to explain. On that day *communiqués* were issued in Rome and in Berlin announcing, in similar though not identical terms, that the Governments of Italy and Germany had decided to recognize General Franco's régime as the Government of Spain and to enter into diplomatic relations with that administration. General Franco's Government had already been recognized by two small Latin-American states, Guatemala and San Salvador, on the 10th November, and Portugal had made a move in the same direction by breaking off diplomatic relations with Madrid on the 23rd October, though she had not accorded recognition to General Franco.³ The step which the German and Italian Governments now took was not in itself unexpected, but it had been generally assumed that they would not commit themselves until Madrid had fallen into the Nationalists' hands and General Franco could claim that the capital as well as the greater part of the country was under his control. In the event, the Nationalists' expectation of capturing Madrid was not fulfilled, and it remained something of a mystery why Signor Mussolini and Herr Hitler should have chosen this particular moment for nailing

¹ See pp. 273 *seqq.*, below.

² See pp. 58 *seqq.*

³ The example of Germany and Italy was followed by Albania on the 26th November. A third Latin-American state, Nicaragua, recognized General Franco at the beginning of December.

their colours to General Franco's mast. Their decision did not help their *protégé* to conquer Madrid, but it had an important effect, nevertheless, on the course of events; for the highly important fact that the prestige of the two Dictators would certainly suffer if the Nationalist leader with whom they had thus publicly associated themselves were to be defeated, was now added to the considerations which had hitherto governed the policy of Rome and Berlin towards Spain. The effects of this new factor were felt without delay; for the check with which the Nationalists met at Madrid (which was partly the result of Russia's disregard, during October, of her undertaking not to send war material to the Spanish Government) led to an intensification of German and Italian efforts to tip the balance in General Franco's favour—efforts which took the form of the despatch of 'volunteers', first from Germany and later from Italy, on an ever-increasing scale during the next few months.

The announcement of Germany's and Italy's recognition of General Franco caused concern in Paris and London, where the serious implications of their decision could not fail to be appreciated, but it did not lead to any immediate modification of French or British policy. It still appeared to the Governments of France and Great Britain that the non-intervention machinery—however imperfectly it might be working—provided the best available means of restraining Germany and Italy from open intervention on behalf of the régime which they had now recognized as the legitimate Government of Spain.

During the second half of November, moreover, the British and French Governments were preoccupied with a new development in Spain, which raised in an urgent form an important question of principle. On the 17th November, the day before the announcement of German and Italian recognition of General Franco's Government, a circular was issued from Burgos informing Governments that the Nationalist command intended to use all the means at their disposal in order to prevent war material from reaching the Spanish Government through the port of Barcelona, and warning foreign ships lying in the harbour to withdraw promptly if they wished to avoid damage from the bombardment of the port. General Franco's primary object was to put a stop to the arrival of cargoes of munitions from Russia, which were carried for the most part in ships flying the Soviet or the Spanish flag, but he was also serving warning of his intention to interfere with ships of any other nationality if they were (or were suspected to be) carrying war material. Moreover the threat of bombardment without further notice affected all foreign ships using the port of Barcelona on their lawful occasions, and not only those which might be engaged in

the arms traffic. A considerable proportion of the normal trade with Barcelona was carried on by British merchant ships, and the British Government's first step was to inquire whether General Franco was prepared to follow a precedent which had already been established at the ports of Tarragona, Valencia, Alicante and Cartagena, where safety zones had been indicated in which foreign ships could lie at anchor under guarantee of immunity from bombardment. By the end of November General Franco had agreed to the creation of a safety zone at Barcelona.

Meanwhile, the implications of General Franco's threat to prevent war material from reaching Barcelona by all the means at his disposal had been giving rise to a good deal of anxiety.¹ The Nationalists' naval strength was certainly not sufficient to enable them to organize an effective blockade of Barcelona, but there had already been several instances of interference with shipping outside Spanish territorial waters, and if, as appeared probable, there was to be an increase in this practice, a very serious situation might be created. By international law a Government or régime whose belligerent rights had been recognized by the Governments of other countries might exercise the right to visit and search on the high seas ships flying the flags of those countries; but in cases where belligerency was not recognized an attempt to interfere with foreign shipping outside territorial waters might legitimately be resisted by force. The British Government, and the Governments of other countries whose merchant ships were affected by General Franco's threat, had to choose between recognizing a state of belligerency in Spain, permitting interference with their ships on the high seas although no right to interfere existed, or resisting such interference, if necessary by force.

The British Cabinet considered these three alternatives at a special meeting on Sunday the 22nd November (the summoning of a Cabinet

¹ The anxiety was increased by reports from Spanish Government sources of submarine activity in the Mediterranean. An explosion which occurred on a Spanish Government cruiser at Cartagena on the 22nd November was officially declared to have been caused by a torpedo, and another cruiser was said to have been attacked, unsuccessfully, at the same time. The Spanish Government's contention was that, as the Nationalists did not possess any submarines, the attacking vessel must have been foreign—presumably either German or Italian. The truth regarding this incident was apparently never established; nor was there any independent confirmation of reports that a Spanish Government submarine was torpedoed by a foreign submarine in the middle of December and that a foreign torpedo landed, but did not explode, on the coast near Barcelona at the end of December. It was not until a good many months had passed that the question of submarines in the Mediterranean became a matter of vital concern to other Governments. (See pp. 340 *segg.*, below.)

meeting on a Sunday was a sufficient indication of the urgency of the problem). They decided against the first two courses, but agreed at the same time to take measures to diminish the risk that they might be obliged to adopt the third course in circumstances which would be hard to justify.

In the existing state of British legislation there was nothing to prevent ships flying the British flag from picking up a cargo of war material at a port outside the British Isles and carrying it to Spain. Although traffic of this kind might not technically be an infringement of the Non-Intervention Agreement, it was certainly not in accordance with the spirit of that agreement, and the British authorities would have been faced with a difficult moral issue if a merchant ship flying the British flag and carrying a cargo of war material to Barcelona or some other Spanish port had appealed to a British warship for protection against interference by General Franco's naval forces. It was therefore decided to introduce special legislation to prohibit the carriage of munitions on British ships from any port to Spain. The outcome of the deliberations of the Cabinet on the 22nd November was announced by Mr Eden in the House of Commons on the 23rd November in the following terms.

The policy of His Majesty's Government is to take no part in the Spanish war and to give no assistance to either side in the struggle. In pursuance of this policy His Majesty's Government have been considering further the importation of arms into Spain by sea and the problems arising therefrom. His Majesty's Government have not so far accorded belligerent rights at sea to either side in the Spanish struggle, and they have no present intention of acceding such rights. As a consequence His Majesty's ships will, should it prove necessary, protect British merchant ships on the high seas against interference by the ships of either party engaged in the conflict in Spain outside the three-mile limit.

At the same time it is not the intention of His Majesty's Government that British shipping should carry war material from any foreign port to any port in Spain. In order to make this as effective as possible in the circumstances, the Government intend to introduce legislation immediately rendering the carriage of arms to Spain by British ships illegal, and I take this opportunity of warning all British shipping accordingly.

The Merchant Shipping (Carriage of Munitions to Spain) Bill, which closed this gap in the non-intervention scheme so far as Great Britain was concerned, was introduced into the House on the 27th November, passed its second reading on the 1st December (after it had been used by the Parliamentary Opposition as a peg on which to hang a protest against the Government's policy towards Spain) and became law on the 3rd December, 1936.

The British Government's decision not to grant belligerent rights to the contending parties in Spain had been taken after consultation with the French Government, and on the 24th November the Ministry of Marine in Paris issued orders to French warships similar to those which had already been sent out by the Admiralty in London in accordance with the policy outlined by Mr. Eden. The French Government did not, however, think it necessary to take special steps to prevent the carriage of munitions to Spain in French ships from ports outside France. The only other Governments which followed the British lead in this respect without delay were those of Norway and Poland, both of which issued orders prohibiting the use of ships flying their flags for the carriage of material to Spain.¹

(d) THE SPANISH GOVERNMENT'S APPEAL UNDER ARTICLE 11 OF THE LEAGUE COVENANT AND THE MEETING OF THE COUNCIL (10TH-12TH DECEMBER, 1936)

The events which have just been recorded had a sequel before the end of November which caused some embarrassment in the Chanceries of Europe. On the 27th November the Spanish Government appealed to the League of Nations under Article 11 of the Covenant, and asked that the Council should meet at the earliest possible moment to consider the position in Spain. Their motive for taking this step was explained by Señor Álvarez del Vayo in a telegram to the Secretary-General of the League. The 'armed intervention of Germany and Italy in the Spanish civil war', which had already been denounced by the Spanish Foreign Minister at Geneva in September, had now

culminated in the recognition of the chief of the rebels set up as a Government by the 'wire-pullers' of these same Powers. Such a proceeding is virtually an act of aggression against the Spanish Republic. The declared intention of the rebels of forcibly preventing free commerce with the ports controlled by the Government claims attention as a factor likely to create international difficulties. . . . These difficulties are increased by the fact that the rebels have been recognized by Germany and Italy, which, and particularly one of them, as is proved by

¹ At least one Norwegian ship was known to have taken a cargo of munitions from a Russian port to Spain during October, and it was probably for this reason that there were several instances during November of interference by General Franco's ships with ships flying the Norwegian flag. A Greek ship was also reported to have been seized during the last week of November, but, as was to be expected, it was ships flying the Soviet flag that were the worst sufferers from the policy announced at Burgos on the 17th November. Between that date and the 4th December six Russian ships were said to have been seized and conveyed to ports under Nationalist control.

information in the possession of the Government of the Republic,¹ are preparing to co-operate with them in the naval sphere as they have done in the air and on the land. These facts, through their very simultaneity, constitute for the Spanish Government a circumstance affecting international relations which threatens to disturb international peace or the good understanding between nations upon which peace depends.

The object of the Spanish Government in taking this step was presumably to make a demonstration which might win them additional moral support from the public opinion of the world; they can hardly have hoped for any concrete result such as the designation of the 'Fascist' Powers as aggressors or the abandonment of the decision not to supply arms to either party in Spain. In the light of recent history there was certainly not the slightest chance that the Council would declare two Great Powers guilty of aggression in Spain, and it was little more probable that there would be any formal decision to modify a policy to which the European states members of the Council had already committed themselves. The Council, it was true, did not consist exclusively of European states, but of its fifteen members only five were not represented on the Non-Intervention Committee, and of those five three were Latin-American states which were more likely to take up the cudgels for General Franco than to act as the champions of the Spanish Government. Even if the Spanish Government's case were to find supporters in the ranks of the lesser states members of the Council, the lack of agreement between the Great Powers appeared to preclude the possibility that the Council would take a definite line of its own. The Council was not, of course, being invited to intervene between the contending parties in Spain (in reply to such an invitation it could have pleaded lack of competence), but it was being asked to assume that foreign intervention on behalf of one party to the conflict, and of one party alone, constituted aggression. To take this view was to accept the thesis that in Spain a legally constituted Government was engaged in attempting to suppress a rebellion, and of the Great Powers which were still members of the Council, the Soviet Union alone was prepared to accept and act upon the full implications of this thesis. France and Great Britain might be embarrassed by a discussion of the incompatibility of non-

¹ In a *communiqué* issued on the 24th November the Spanish Government had accused Germany and Italy—and particularly the former—of giving naval assistance to the Nationalists. The main charge, which was supported by a series of specific allegations, was that German and Italian warships had spied on the Spanish Republican fleet and made its movements known to the Nationalist naval command. It was also alleged that air attacks on towns in territory controlled by the Spanish Government had been based on a similar system of espionage.

intervention with the Spanish Government's legal rights, but they were not likely to be diverted by anything that could be said at Geneva from the line which they had decided to follow, while the other Great Power which was still a member of the Council had just declared that it recognized General Franco's régime and not the Republican administration as the legally constituted Government of Spain.

In point of fact, there appeared to be little probability that the Italian Government would abandon their recent practice of abstaining from participation in League proceedings in order to send a representative to Geneva if a meeting of the Council were to be summoned to consider the Spanish appeal. Great indignation was expressed in Italy at the terms of the Spanish Government's telegram, with its accusation of aggression, and even if the fear that Italy might take this as a pretext for a final breach with the League was not fulfilled (as, in the event, it was not), the Spanish move was certainly likely to widen the breach between Rome and Geneva, and that at a moment when there appeared to be a prospect that diplomatic conversations in Rome would bring about an improvement in the relations between Italy and Great Britain and thus help to relax the international tension in the Mediterranean—tension which was not only an aftermath of the Italo-Abyssinian war but was at the same time a cause and an effect of the situation in Spain. Germany, the other Power which was accused of aggression by the Spanish Government, was equally unlikely to attend a Council meeting even if a special invitation were to be extended to her, and the absence of these two interested parties (and also of Portugal, who was not a member of the Council) would invest any proceedings which might be taken at Geneva in connexion with the Spanish Government's appeal with an air of unreality. In the circumstances it was not surprising that there should have been a feeling, even in quarters where devotion to the League was proclaimed most loudly and persistently as a guiding principle, that a consideration of the Spanish problem at Geneva would serve no useful purpose and might only result in a further loss of prestige which the League could ill afford to suffer.

Nevertheless, when the Secretary-General of the League consulted the Governments which were represented on the Council in regard to the action to be taken on the Spanish Government's appeal, the majority of them found themselves obliged to agree, however reluctantly, that it was not possible to refuse the request that a meeting of the Council should be summoned at an early date. There was

a minority, to which Poland and Chile¹ belonged, which would have preferred to take the more straightforward course of refusing to consider the Spanish Government's appeal; but the general view was that the Spanish Government's right to raise the question under Article 11 of the Covenant could not be contested and that the Council could not avoid giving them a hearing. It was accordingly decided that the Council should meet for its ninety-fifth (extraordinary) session on the 10th December, with the Spanish Government's appeal as the only question on its agenda.²

Before the Council met, it became known that Italy was not sending a delegate to Geneva, and that neither Mr. Eden nor Monsieur Delbos nor Monsieur Litvinov would be present. In the absence of the Foreign Ministers of the Great Powers, no discussions on policy were to be expected at Geneva, and the proceedings were clearly intended to be little more than a formality. It would, however, be necessary to devise some kind of resolution which would bring the meeting to a close, and the lines which this could most suitably follow were discussed through diplomatic channels during the first ten days of December. In circumstances in which a majority of the members of the Council were anxious above all not to be obliged to come down definitely on one side or the other of the Spanish fence, a convenient precedent was offered by the fact that the Council had generally refrained in the past from taking a definite line on any dispute with

¹ The Chilean Government, whose representative would have to preside over the next meeting of the Council, informed the Secretary-General that in their view 'a meeting of the Council at the present moment would not be favourable to the objects which Article 11 of the Covenant has in view. . . . Such a meeting would be liable to diminish the prestige of the League of Nations, and would not have a pacifying effect without the attendance and support of all the parties concerned.' Chile's attitude on this occasion was consistent with the policy which she had followed recently in regard to the League's political activities. While she remained a member of the League and allowed herself to be elected to a seat on the Council in 1934, she dissociated herself from the decisions of her fellow members on important political questions. The Chilean representative had abstained from voting in March 1932 when the League Assembly decided not to recognize 'Manchukuo'. He had abstained again in March 1936, when the Council decided that Germany's reoccupation of the Rhineland was a breach of the Versailles Treaty, and again in September 1936, when the Assembly accepted the report of its Credentials Committee on the question of Abyssinian representation.

Another of the Latin-American states members of the Council dealt with difficulties of this kind by absenting herself from meetings at which such decisions were to be taken. An Ecuadorean representative attended only the first of the series of Council meetings which was held in London in March 1936 to consider Germany's breach of her treaty obligations, and Ecuador was not represented at all at the ninety-fifth session in December 1936.

² The Franco-Turkish dispute over the Sanjāq of Alexandretta was later added to the agenda (see the *Survey for 1936*, Part V, section (iv)).

which some other international organ was already concerning itself, and had merely endorsed the efforts which that organ had been making towards a solution of the problem.¹ The line of least resistance for the Council on this occasion would certainly be to express approval of the policy which the Non-Intervention Committee in London was endeavouring—at any rate in theory—to carry into effect. It remained to be seen whether the delegates of the Spanish Republican Government (which would be represented at Geneva as a member of the Council and not merely as the author of the appeal under consideration) and of the Soviet Government (on whose advice it was assumed that the Spanish Government had acted in making their appeal) could be persuaded to accept this procedure; and the desirability of reducing the risk of effective opposition to the course of leaving the Spanish problem to the Non-Intervention Committee was no doubt in the minds of the French and British Governments when they decided at the beginning of December upon a joint initiative with three main objects: to push forward the scheme of control which was already under consideration;² to bring the question of volunteers within the scope of the Non-Intervention Agreement;³ and to explore the possibility of mediation between the contending parties in Spain.⁴

The Spanish Government's appeal was dealt with at three public sessions of the Council on the 11th and 12th December, 1936. There was no attempt to stage a full debate on the Spanish situation, and although Señor Álvarez del Vayo did not avoid controversy in his opening speech on behalf of the Spanish Government, he declared that he did not wish the meeting to be 'recriminatory in character'. He declared that 'international war' was 'raging on Spanish soil', and suggested that 'after Germany and Italy had succeeded in getting the upper hand in Spain and using the occasion to retain for themselves the Balearic Islands and perhaps other naval bases in key positions either in the Mediterranean or [in] the Atlantic, the same game might be started again elsewhere'. It was these wider aspects, Señor Álvarez del Vayo assured his colleagues, that the Spanish Government had in mind in making their appeal. They had asked for a meeting of the Council 'solely for the reason that an international war exists in fact, and that this war, if it is still ignored, may, when it is least expected, produce a situation which can no longer be

¹ This had been the Council's attitude in several instances when Latin-American disputes had been referred to the League. (See the *Survey for 1930*, p. 429; the *Survey for 1933*, p. 422; the *Survey for 1936*, pp. 862-3.)

² See pp. 253 *seqq.*, above, and pp. 287 *seqq.*, below.

³ See pp. 273 *seqq.*, below.

⁴ See pp. 271-3, below.

controlled' On the subject of non-intervention Señor Álvarez del Vayo remarked that his Government had accepted the agreement because of their 'concern for peace' and in spite of their conviction that they had every 'right to obtain openly everything [that they] needed to put down the rebellion'; but he pointed out that 'no one can have any doubts as to the complete ineffectiveness of the system, as it has been conceived and applied hitherto'. The Spanish Government were therefore 'concerned above all with making certain that the system of control' which was now under consideration would 'be such as to give all the necessary guarantees of effectiveness'.

The fact that the operation of the Non-Intervention Agreement had not prevented the supply of arms to both sides in Spain was admitted by both Lord Cranborne and Monsieur Viénot, who were representing the British and the French Governments respectively, but they both deprecated Señor Álvarez del Vayo's description of the system as completely ineffective. Lord Cranborne also referred to the humanitarian aspect of the Spanish problem, and appealed for further international action with the object of relieving the sufferings of the civilian population.¹ Both he and Monsieur Viénot laid stress on the prospect for an improvement in the situation as a whole which would be opened up if the recent Franco-British initiative met with a satisfactory response, and they appealed to the Council, and to the Governments of European states not represented on the Council, to give their full support to the attempt which was now being made to bring the conflict in Spain to an end by mediation.²

Of the other speakers in the debate, Monsieur Potemkin, for the Soviet Union, took the opportunity to define once more his Government's attitude towards non-intervention (that is, their acceptance of the principle as a matter of expediency, without prejudice to their legal right to supply arms to the Spanish Government), but he can hardly have expected to convince his hearers of the truth of his statement that the U.S.S.R. had 'faithfully fulfilled its undertakings'—in contrast to the Governments which had 'openly intervened in the interests of the rebels'. For the rest, he emphasized the 'need for effective supervision' over the execution of the Non-Intervention Agreement, and promised co-operation in efforts to terminate the hostilities in Spain.

¹ See section (iii) of this part of the present volume for the humanitarian work undertaken by various agencies in Spain.

² The absence of any response to this appeal from Señor Álvarez del Vayo was not a good omen for the success of the attempt at mediation, nor was the remark, which he made at the end of his opening speech, that 'the Government and people of Spain are sure of the final and complete victory of their cause'.

Monsieur Komarnicki, for Poland, expressed with unexpected bluntness the view that the Council ought never to have been summoned to discuss the situation in Spain, while Mr. Jordan, the representative of New Zealand, put the opposite view with no less bluntness, and declared that his Government were prepared to co-operate with other members of the Council or the Assembly in examining 'the cause of the trouble' and were ready 'if necessary to act in accordance with the requirements of the situation'. Mr. Jordan, moreover, took his stand openly by the side of the Spanish Government, whose right to be regarded as a legally constituted Government engaged in suppressing a rebellion he accepted as incontestable.

The Council did not appoint a *rappoiteur* on the Spanish question, and the task of drawing up a resolution was carried out by the members of the Council at an informal meeting on the morning of the 12th December. The principal difficulty arose out of Señor Álvarez del Vayo's insistence that the resolution must contain some reference to the question of foreign intervention in Spain. A majority of the other members of the Council would have preferred to deal with this problem by omission, and there was never any question of their acceding to the Spanish Foreign Minister's wishes to the extent of condemning intervention only when it was on behalf of the Nationalists. A compromise was finally agreed upon, and, at a public meeting of the Council on the evening of the 12th December, the Chairman (Señor Edwards, of Chile) was able to present for adoption a resolution in which the Council, without any direct mention of Spain, expressed the opinion 'that the good understanding between nations upon which peace depends . . . ought to be maintained irrespective of the internal régimes of states', and affirmed that it was 'the duty of every state to respect the territorial integrity and political independence of other states' and to 'refrain from intervening in the internal affairs of another state'.

The resolution also took note of the 'new attempts' which were being made by the Non-Intervention Committee 'to make its action more effective, in particular by instituting measures of supervision', and recommended members of the League who were also represented on the London Committee 'to spare no pains to render the non-intervention undertakings as stringent as possible'. It went on to express sympathy with 'the action which has just been taken on the international plane by the United Kingdom and France'; and finally it noted that 'co-ordinated action of an international character' might be needed in connexion with immediate humanitarian problems and with the eventual reconstruction of Spain, and

authorized the Secretary-General in this connexion to 'make available the technical services of the League of Nations should a suitable opportunity occur'.

Señor Alvarez del Vayo accepted the resolution, which was adopted unanimously, but he pointed out that the 'step taken by the Council' did not 'exhaust the question' which the Spanish Government had raised, and he reserved 'the right, should circumstances render it necessary, to ask the Council to proceed with the examination of the question'. This part of the Council's proceedings was brought to an end by statements on the humanitarian aspect of the Spanish situation which were made by Señor Edwards (in his capacity as representative of Chile) and by the Bolivian delegate, with special reference to the right of asylum in Legations and Embassies at Madrid—a question on which the Latin-American countries had strong feelings and which had already involved several of them in controversy with the Spanish Republican authorities.¹

(e) THE QUESTION OF PROHIBITING THE DESPATCH OF VOLUNTEERS TO SPAIN

At the meeting of the Non-Intervention Committee on the 2nd December, 1936, at which it was decided that the scheme for controlling traffic with Spain by land and sea should be communicated in outline to the Spanish Government and to the Nationalists,² it was also decided that the Chairman's Sub-Committee, at its next meeting on the 4th December, should begin to examine the possibility of extending the scope of the Non-Intervention Agreement to cover the prohibition of the despatch of volunteers to Spain.

During the past three months it had been the Spanish Government and not the Nationalists who had profited from the fact that the embargo which the states signatories of the Non-Intervention Agreement undertook to put into force applied only to war material and not to personnel. Ever since the beginning of the war volunteers of various nationalities had been making their way into Spain—for the most part across France, which was also the country of origin of a large proportion of the volunteers³—and offering their services to the Spanish Government. These foreigners, all of whom were volunteers in the generally accepted meaning of the term, were drafted in October

¹ See pp. 388–90, below.

² See p. 256, above.

³ There were also considerable numbers of Polish, Czech, British and Belgian volunteers as well as German and Italian anti-Fascist exiles. The majority of the Polish volunteers had previously been working in France, but a not inconsiderable number went direct from Poland to Spain. All the Poles served together in one brigade under Polish command.

into five International Brigades,¹ and early in November 1936 these Brigades had their baptism of fire as units in the battle for Madrid. Their exploits on that front won them wide renown, and they were generally believed to have been responsible for the stemming of the Nationalist tide.² There appear to have been no Russians serving in the International Brigades or in any of the infantry forces at the Spanish Government's disposal, the most important rôles filled by Russians in the Republican Army³ (apart from staff officers and military instructors) were those of artillery officers and air pilots.⁴ On the Nationalist side, also, the foreign aeroplanes which formed the great bulk of the air force at General Franco's disposal were piloted for the most part by nationals of the country of supply, and a certain number of technicians also accompanied the mechanized equipment which was sent to Spain by Germany and Italy.⁵ Apart from these experts, however, it does not appear that either of the 'Fascist' Powers began to contribute to General Franco's resources in man-power until about the end of November 1936. It was a report of the arrival of several thousand Germans at Cádiz which led to the question being raised in the Non-Intervention Committee at the beginning of December, and there were further arrivals from Germany during that month. Italy had begun to send men to Spain before Christmas and continued the process on a rising scale throughout January and February. By the 20th February, when the prohibition of the despatch of volunteers was put into force,⁶ the Italian contingent probably outnumbered that from Germany by at least three to one, and this disproportion was subsequently increased still further.⁷

¹ See also p. 48, above. Simultaneously with the organization of the volunteers in International Brigades, the Communist Parties in different countries throughout the world began the systematic recruiting of volunteers for Spain.

² See pp. 60-1, above.

³ Russian influence over the Republican civil administration was at least as important as Russian participation in the conduct of the war (see p. 201, above).

⁴ See also p. 199, above.

⁵ See also pp. 47, 192-3, above.

⁶ See p. 288, below.

⁷ Accurate information regarding the numbers of foreigners serving with one side or the other in the Spanish war was virtually impossible to obtain. Each of the contending parties naturally tended to publish under-estimates of the foreign troops at its own disposal and over-estimates of those at its adversary's disposal, and it was manifestly very difficult for foreign observers, however free they might be to make inquiries, to do more than guess at the composition of military forces spread over such a vast field. At the end of January 1937 the Spanish Government themselves put the strength of the International Brigades at 15,000, but in anti-Republican quarters it was suggested that a figure of 30,000 would be nearer the mark. Other estimates from various sources mentioned 7,000 in March, 8,000 or 9,000 in May, and about 14,000 in October 1937.

Estimates of the number of Germans at General Franco's disposal in

The news, which was received at the beginning of December, that a few days earlier some 5,000 or 6,000 Germans (not wearing uniform but carrying arms and equipment) had landed at Cádiz and passed through Seville on their way to the front, caused great anxiety in London and Paris. The convention by which the foreigners serving on either side in the Spanish war were referred to as 'volunteers' did not disguise the fact that there was a fundamental difference between the assistance in personnel which was given to the Spanish Nationalists and that given to the Spanish Government. The volunteers who crossed the French frontier in order to enlist in the International Brigades went in small batches or as individuals, and the responsibility of the French Government and other 'democratic' Governments in the matter was negative and not positive; they might have failed to prevent their nationals from carrying out their private intentions, but they had not ordered them to go to Spain. The Governments of Germany and Italy also declared that if any of their nationals were finding their way to Spain they were going of their own free will, and in Germany at any rate it seems to have been true that the detachments were recruited for the most part by inviting men serving with the colours to volunteer for Spain.¹ Under a dictatorial régime, however, it was

February varied between 10,000 and 30,000, but the opinion most widely held was that the number was then 12,000 or 15,000, and in the autumn of 1937 10,000 was suggested as a maximum estimate for the German contribution by the Spanish Government themselves. The number of Italians who had arrived in Spain by the middle of February 1937 was put by some observers at 30,000, while others thought that the figure was as high as 70,000. The wide divergence between the various estimates of the number of foreigners serving under General Franco could probably be partially explained by the fact that a considerable proportion of these foreigners were generally on garrison duty and not in the front line. The Italians, for instance, had for some time a substantial force in garrison on the island of Majorca, and many thousands of Italians were also garrisoned on the mainland, especially in mining districts. As for the German infantry contingent, it hardly saw the front for many months. Thus the higher estimates of the numbers of the Nationalists' foreign volunteers might be assumed to include troops in garrison, while lower estimates may have covered only those actually in the firing-line.

Although there was officially declared to be no evidence (see p. 289 *n.*, below) that the despatch of volunteers from Italy continued after the prohibition of volunteers had come into force, there were numerous allegations during the six months following the agreement of the 20th February that the total number of Italians in Spain was being substantially increased by fresh arrivals. In October 1937, when the total Italian force was estimated in quarters unfriendly to the Nationalists to be 100,000 at least, the Italian Government announced officially that the correct figure was 40,000 (see p. 366, below).

¹ See also p. 192, above. From statements made by Italian prisoners who fell into the hands of the Spanish Government's forces it appeared that many of the Italians had left Italy under the impression that they were on their way to Abyssinia.

evident that there could be no such thing as genuine volunteering on any considerable scale, German and Italian subjects, whose lives were ordered for them in detail by authority, were certainly not free to leave home in their thousands in order to fight on foreign soil as and when they chose. The distinction between the two kinds of 'volunteers' was drawn with considerable effect by Monsieur Maisky at a meeting of the Non-Intervention Committee on the 9th December, when he contrasted the International Brigades—composed of representatives of different nationalities who had crossed the frontier into Spain each at his own risk and usually despite the wishes and without the knowledge of his Government—with the detachment of Germans who had recently arrived in Spain.

Even if we assume [Monsieur Maisky was reported to have said] that all the 6,000 Germans . . . are not part of the regular German Army, can we even then consider them as ordinary volunteers? . . . In a country like Germany this could only happen because the German Government knew of, sympathised with and supported with all the force of State power, the despatch of the 6,000 troops in question.

The Governments of Italy, Germany and France, and to a less extent those of Russia and Portugal, were confronted in December 1936 with much the same choice in the matter of volunteers as they had had in the previous August in regard to despatches of war material to Spain. They could either agree that their own freedom to send volunteers to the help of the party which they favoured should be subject to such restrictions as might be imposed by an international agreement (with the prospect of the establishment of a system of control over the execution of the agreement), or they could allow their rivals unrestricted freedom to send similar help in their turn to their own *protégés*. It was obvious that a competition in sending volunteers to Spain might have even more serious repercussions upon the general international situation than a competition in sending war material; but the consideration that an unrestricted assistance to the two sides was more likely to leave their relative strength the same, though at a rising level, than to give one side the preponderance over the other did not apply with as much force in the case of volunteers as in the case of war material. The 'Fascist' Powers had some reason to believe in their own ability to turn the balance in General Franco's favour by contributions of personnel, since the organized reinforcements which they were in a position to send to Spain in the near future might be expected (especially in view of the uncertainty as to the internal situation in Russia) to be superior in quantity and quality to the foreign assistance in personnel which the Spanish

Government might hope to receive. At all events, it was the 'Fascist' Powers which hung back and delayed the conclusion of an agreement on volunteers, while the Soviet Government supported the efforts of France and Great Britain to speed up the negotiations.

The new and serious development in the situation was discussed between the French and British Governments at the beginning of December 1936. The outcome of their deliberations was a decision not only to raise the question of volunteers as a matter of urgency at the Non-Intervention Committee but also to make the joint *démarche* which was referred to during the debate in the League Council on the 11th-12th December.¹ On the 4th December, the Governments of France and Great Britain, 'having established the identity of their views' on the Spanish situation,

asked the German, Italian, Portuguese and Soviet Governments . . ., through their diplomatic representatives to those Governments, to join with them in declaring their absolute determination to renounce strictly all direct or indirect action which might in any way be calculated to lead to foreign intervention in the conflict, and, as a consequence, to address to their representative on the London Committee appropriate instructions with a view to the organization of a fully effective control. Through the same channel, they . . . further asked the four Governments . . . to join them in a spirit of humanity in an endeavour to put an end to the armed conflict in Spain by means of an offer of mediation with the object of enabling Spain to give united expression to its national will.²

Before dealing with the outcome of this *démarche* so far as the questions of direct and indirect intervention and of control were concerned, the fate of the offer of mediation may be briefly recorded. This was not the first occasion since the outbreak of the war in Spain on which a similar attempt had been made. On the 16th August, 1936, the Government of Uruguay had taken the initiative of suggesting to all the Governments which had accepted invitations to the Inter-American Conference on the Maintenance of Peace which was to be held at Buenos Aires in December 1936³ that they should co-operate in an offer of friendly mediation between the contending parties in Spain. This proposal did not by any means meet with universal approval. The United States Government rejected the suggestion on the 20th August, on the ground that it was incompatible with the principle of non-interference upon which they were

¹ See pp. 265, 266, above.

² Quoted from the English version of a joint *communiqué* which was published in London and in Paris on the 9th December.

³ See the *Survey for 1936*, Part VI, section (i).

basing their policy towards Spain;¹ and Mexico also rejected it as an interference in the affairs of another state. Peru and Brazil did not refuse to consider the idea but showed no enthusiasm for it. Argentina and Chile, on the other hand, fell in promptly with the Uruguayan suggestion, and the Argentinian Ambassador to Spain took the lead in negotiations which were initiated at the end of August at St. Jean de Luz²—whither practically all the heads of diplomatic missions who had formerly been domiciled in Madrid had by that time withdrawn. These negotiations had the twofold object of bringing about a greater regard for humanitarian principles in the conduct of the war³ and of inducing the two parties to agree to an armistice. Preliminary conversations with representatives of the Spanish Government and of the Nationalists took place, but so far as the proposal for an armistice was concerned no progress was possible when each side was firmly convinced that its own complete victory was the only end to the struggle that could be seriously envisaged.

No greater success attended the Anglo-French attempt of the 4th December to initiate negotiations for an armistice. Lord Cranborne told the Council of the League of Nations on the 11th December that in his Government's opinion 'the moment' was 'in many ways propitious' for such an initiative;⁴ it was 'difficult to believe that any rapid

¹ See pp. 215–16, above. This attitude did not prevent the United States Government from giving their moral support to suggestions for mediation in which they were not asked to take an active part. On the 10th December, 1936, the Acting Secretary of State expressed the Government's 'very earnest hope' that the recent Anglo-French *démarche* would lead to the termination of the hostilities in Spain.

² The headquarters of international diplomacy was later established at Hendaye. The only Governments whose heads of missions remained *avant* the Spanish Government and followed them from Madrid to Valencia and from Valencia to Barcelona were those of the U.S.S.R. and Mexico, but most of the other Governments left *chargés d'affaires* in their Embassies or Legations at Madrid for some months after their Ambassadors or Ministers had withdrawn to France. The perils to which these officers were exposed were illustrated by the fate of the Baron de Borchgrave, the First Secretary of the Belgian Embassy. Monsieur de Borchgrave disappeared from Madrid at the end of December, and his dead body, which was found after some days, bore the marks of assassination. This affair was the subject of strong representations by the Belgian Government to the Spanish Government, and the latter agreed, at the beginning of February 1937, to pay an indemnity. It was also arranged that the legal question of how far the Spanish Government could be held responsible should be referred to the Permanent Court of International Justice; but the case, which came before the Court in November 1937, was withdrawn by agreement between the parties early in January 1938.

³ See section (iii) below.

⁴ This opinion was based on the fact that the Nationalist offensive against Madrid, which a few weeks earlier had seemed about to give a decisive turn to the war, had now spent its force without achieving its purpose (see pp. 61–2).

end to the war' was 'in sight. Its continuance must be disastrous. There' could 'only be injury to the cause of peace and civilization and increased suffering to the people of Spain.' These considerations, however weighty they might appear to onlookers in France and Great Britain, had no more influence over Spanish minds in December 1936 than they had had three months earlier, and the response which was made to the Anglo-French suggestion by three out of the four Governments to whom it was addressed in the first place was not such as to encourage the hope that at this stage the backers of the two parties in Spain would exert pressure upon their *protégés* to accept a peaceful settlement. The Soviet Government, indeed, who replied on the 9th December, declared without reservation that they were ready to take part in an attempt to bring the conflict to an end by mediation, but the other three Governments, all of whom answered on the 12th December, made it clear that the proposal was doomed to failure. The Portuguese Government expressed this opinion in so many words, though they declared that if they could be satisfied that the contending parties would accept mediation they would be ready to study with other Powers the form which such mediation might take. Germany and Italy also offered to co-operate in examining proposals which other Governments thought likely to succeed, but explained that for their own part they regarded a reconciliation between the Nationalist Government in Spain and the 'party in opposition' as hardly conceivable. Meanwhile, the comments of the Spanish Press had made it clear that the idea of mediation was in fact completely unacceptable to both sides in the conflict, and this part of the Anglo-French proposals was allowed to drop—after it had served the purpose, for which it had perhaps been principally intended, of helping the Council of the League of Nations to extricate itself from a difficult situation.¹

The Anglo-French attempt to put fresh vigour into the Non-Intervention Committee's efforts to deal with the problems of direct and indirect intervention and of control was not much more successful. The question of volunteers was discussed at two meetings of the Chairman's Sub-Committee on the 4th and 7th December, on the British Government's initiative. The statement which was made by Lord Plymouth was reported as follows in the official *communiqué* on the second of these two meetings.

¹ In the House of Commons at Westminster on the 3rd March, 1937, Mr. Eden replied to the question whether any steps could be taken to provide a basis for negotiation between the parties to the Spanish conflict by the statement that there was 'no indication so far that either party was prepared to consider mediation'.

Reports are reaching His Majesty's Government that nationals of foreign Powers are arriving in Spain in increasing numbers to take part in the Spanish civil war on both sides. These reports are of such a nature that their evidence cannot be ignored. If this practice is allowed to continue it must have grave repercussions on international relations outside Spain, in addition to prolonging the conflict in that country. In the view, therefore, of His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom it is their duty as a member of the International Committee on Non-Intervention to urge most strongly that the Committee should at once take this matter into consideration and agree decisions and measures to put a stop to this practice.¹

This British initiative was warmly supported by the French representative—whose Government's scruples regarding the interference with the liberty of the subject which would be involved in the prohibition of volunteers were not proof against the menace to French security which the presence of a German expeditionary force in Spain would represent—and Monsieur Maisky was also a strong advocate of immediate action. The opposition to the idea of isolating the problem of volunteers and dealing with it as a matter of special urgency was led by the Italian representative, Count Grandi, with active support from his German and Portuguese colleagues, and with the object, it was generally assumed, of gaining time for the despatch to General Franco of further detachments of volunteers. The representatives of the 'Fascist' Powers could point out, with perfect truth, that they themselves had been the first to raise the question of prohibiting the despatch of volunteers. References to this question had been made in the replies of the German and Italian Governments to the original French proposal for an agreement on non-intervention,² but in this context volunteers had been put forward as one item in a list of various forms of 'indirect' intervention which ought to be prohibited. The 'Fascist' Powers now declared themselves unwilling

¹ *The Times*, 8th December, 1936.

² See pp. 235, 237, above. In their note of the 7th January, 1937 (see p. 279, below), the Italian Government enumerated various occasions during the past four months on which they had recommended that the problems of 'indirect intervention', including the enrolment of volunteers, ought to be examined. Count Ciano had raised this question in conversation with the French Ambassador on the 5th August (see p. 235, above) and again on the 10th; it had been referred to in the Italian note of the 21st August accepting the invitation to become a party to the Non-Intervention Agreement (see pp. 240-1, above); it had been raised again by the Italian representative on the Non-Intervention Committee on the 14th September; and on the 18th September written proposals on the subject had been submitted to the Chairman's Sub-Committee. According to the Italian version, the Committee had been prevented 'by the opposition of other delegations' from beginning to examine the proposals regarding indirect intervention until the 5th October, and the 'diversity of opinions' had then prevented any progress being made.

to take the question of volunteers out of its context for separate examination.

It should be clearly understood [Count Grandi declared] that the question of indirect intervention must be examined by the Committee in the same form in which it was originally submitted. In other words, the examination of the possible measures to be adopted must be preceded by a classification of all the forms of indirect intervention so as to include simultaneously the sending of volunteers, political agitators, and financial assistance, as well as all those further forms of indirect intervention that the Committee might deem it necessary to consider.

The exchange of views was continued on the same lines at a meeting of the full Non-Intervention Committee on the 9th December, when the champions of the rival 'ideologies' once more engaged in mutual recriminations on the nature and extent of the foreign help which the two parties in Spain were receiving ¹

It was not open to doubt that the attitude adopted by Count Grandi and Herr von Ribbentrop in London on the question of indirect intervention was in accordance with the policy of their Governments, but if proof was required it was supplied by the terms of the notes in which those Governments replied on the 12th December to the Anglo-French proposal of the 4th December for a new joint declaration against any form of intervention in Spain. The Soviet Government, in their note of the 9th December, had assured the French and British Governments of their willingness to take part in such a declaration as well as in any attempt that might be made to mediate between the parties in Spain. The German and Italian replies, which had evidently been drawn up in consultation and were virtually identical in substance though not in form, also declared that the two Governments were ready to 'take part . . . in all discussions as to how the situation in Spain can be altered and effective control of the agreements . . . brought about',² but they qualified this statement by expressing the 'opinion that the prohibition of direct or indirect intervention must be taken in hand as one unified problem'. The Portuguese Government, in their note of the 12th December, declared bluntly that the Non-Intervention Agreement was 'now proved to have failed', but they promised to consider means of securing the effective application of the agreement and to instruct

¹ Herr von Ribbentrop, for instance, was said to have referred to reports to the effect that 25,000 Frenchmen and 35,000 Russians were fighting in the ranks of the Valencia Government, and Monsieur Maisky retorted by drawing that distinction between the two kinds of volunteers which has already been quoted (on p. 270, above).

² Quoted from the German note of the 12th December (English text in *The Times*, 14th December, 1936).

their representative in London 'to study measures with the other Governments'—with the proviso, however, that they would not 'undertake to allow control of their internal laws by any Power'.

The Portuguese Government thus gave notice that they intended to maintain their opposition to the scheme for controlling traffic with Spain which had been drawn up by the Chairman's Sub-Committee, in so far as it would apply to Portugal. In accordance with the decision which had been taken by the Non-Intervention Committee on the 2nd December,¹ an outline of this scheme had been transmitted on the 4th December to the Spanish Government at Valencia and to the Nationalist headquarters at Burgos. The replies from Valencia and Burgos did not reject the plan outright, but also did not hold out much hope of its ultimate acceptance. The Spanish Government, in a note of the 16th December, set out with considerable frankness their already well-known views on the situation in regard to non-intervention, and, while they declared that they accepted the plan of supervision in principle, they reserved the right to reject it in whole or in part after a more detailed examination. The reply from Burgos, which was conveyed to the British Ambassador at Hendaye on the 19th December, consisted of a series of questions relating to the details of the plan, answers to which were required before any decision on the acceptability of the plan as a whole could be taken.

The next step on the part of the Non-Intervention Committee must obviously be to supply Valencia and Burgos with a full text of the scheme of supervision, the technical details of which had by now been worked out by experts. The replies of the two parties to the outline of the proposals were considered at meetings of the Chairman's Sub-Committee on the 22nd December and of the full Committee on the 23rd, and it was decided that the details of the plan should be communicated to the Spanish Government and to the Nationalists on the 1st January, 1937, unless in the meantime any of the Governments represented on the Committee should have raised any point for further discussion. It was also agreed that the members of the Committee should ask their Governments to give their final approval to the detailed plan at the earliest possible moment.

At these two meetings on the 22nd and 23rd December there was also a further exchange of views on the best method of approaching the problem of indirect intervention. Since the question of volunteers had been broached at the beginning of the month, little or no progress had been made towards obtaining the consent of the

¹ See p. 256, above.

specially interested Powers¹ to the adoption of measures for putting a stop to the despatch of reinforcements to Spain, and reports that Germans were continuing to arrive in Spain in large numbers naturally added to the anxiety of the French and British Governments, which was expressed through diplomatic channels and not only at the meetings of the Non-Intervention Committee.² The only action on which the Chairman's Sub-Committee, at its meeting on the 22nd December, could agree (and that with difficulty) was the appointment, at the suggestion of the German representative, of two sub-committees—one to deal with volunteers and one with the financial aspect of indirect intervention.³ This procedure would clearly provide plenty of opportunities for the delay which it was the main concern of the British and French Governments to avoid, and those two Governments accordingly decided, in spite of the

¹ One at least of the Powers which were less directly interested in the Spanish question had already taken action in the sense desired. The Polish representative on the Non-Intervention Committee informed the Chairman on the 18th December that his Government had enacted legislation prohibiting the transport of war material to Spain in Polish ships or aeroplanes, and that they would not only withhold the permission which was required by the Polish Citizenship Act before Polish nationals could enlist for foreign service but would deprive of their citizenship any Polish nationals who might evade the regulations and find their way to Spain.

² Monsieur Delbos had warned the German Ambassador just before Christmas that the potential threat to the southern frontier of France was being taken very seriously (see p. 190, above), and strong representations were also made by Mr. Eden to Herr von Ribbentrop.

³ The interest of General Franco's supporters in the financial aspect of intervention had been greatly stimulated by the rumours which began to circulate at the end of October 1936 regarding the whereabouts of the gold reserve of the Bank of Spain. It was common knowledge that the gold was no longer in Madrid, whence it had been removed by the Government on the approach of General Franco's forces; and according to some reports the whole or part of the reserve had been transferred to Paris, while other reports gave Moscow as its destination. The Burgos régime took the view, in which they were supported by Germany and Italy, that the gold was a national asset, and that the Republican authorities had no right to use it to finance their military operations. When the Financial Sub-Committee began work in January 1937, it found this controversy one of its principal obstacles. The Soviet representative supported the view, which had been expressed by the Spanish Government, that Spanish capital assets should not be included in a discussion of means for preventing financial intervention. The 'Fascist' representatives, however, were insistent upon the examination of the controversy, and in March it was referred to a special legal sub-committee. At the end of April, the legal experts were reported to have reached a deadlock and to be unable to decide for or against a proposal to send a circular inquiry to all Governments regarding movements of Spanish gold, and, although the attempt to reach an agreement for the prevention of financial intervention was not formally abandoned, the upshot of the discussions—as the German representative complained at a later stage (see p. 336, below)—was that the whole question was effectively 'smothered'.

discouraging results of their earlier joint *démarche*, that they would make a concerted appeal to the specially interested Governments to take immediate action in the matter of volunteers.

On the 24th December the French and British diplomatic representatives in Berlin, Rome, Lisbon and Moscow were instructed to impress upon the Governments to which they were accredited the urgent need for putting an end to the despatch of volunteers to Spain, and to request them to take the necessary legislative measures at the earliest possible moment. The hope of the French and British Governments was that it might be possible to put into force a simultaneous prohibition on the enlistment, in either of the Spanish armies, of nationals of the six countries (France, Great Britain, Germany, Italy, the U.S.S.R. and Portugal) on an agreed date before the middle of January.

This hope was not fulfilled. The Soviet Government were again the first of the four Governments approached to reply to the Anglo-French *démarche*, and again their reply was favourable. French diplomacy had been especially active in Moscow during recent weeks, and it was believed in Paris that the Soviet Government were genuinely willing to go no farther in assisting the Spanish Government if they could be satisfied that 'Fascist' assistance to General Franco would also come to a halt. The French Government therefore accepted as satisfactory the note of the 29th December in which the Soviet Government declared that they were ready to enter into an agreement for the prohibition of the enlistment of foreign nationals for service in Spain on certain conditions. These conditions were that the signatories of the agreement should consent to the establishment of an effective system of control, to be put into operation with or without the consent of the Spanish Nationalists; that, pending the introduction of the system of control, full publicity should be given to the reports of official and unofficial agents regarding the arrival of volunteers in Spain; and that the agreement should be concluded at the earliest possible date in order to preclude the possibility of a great increase in the number of volunteers while the negotiations were in progress.

The Soviet Government's forebodings that the 'Fascist' Powers would once more play for time and use the interval to increase their assistance to General Franco were justified by the event. Neither Germany nor Italy made any reply to the Anglo-French *démarche* for ten days, and the answers which they then gave were not definitive. The Portuguese Government, in a communication which reached Paris and London on the 5th January, 1937, and the German and

Italian Governments in notes of the 7th January, all raised objections to the procedure of dealing with the question of volunteers by special diplomatic action and intimated that they preferred to continue the discussions through the medium of the Non-Intervention Committee. The German and Italian Governments, however, were now prepared to negotiate an agreement on volunteers on the understanding that 'the solution of other questions connected with indirect intervention' would be 'taken in hand immediately', and with the reservation that they might reconsider their attitude on the matter of volunteers if agreement were not reached on the prevention of other forms of indirect intervention. The German and Italian Governments, like the Soviet Government, laid stress on the necessity for establishing an effective system of control over the execution of the undertaking not to send volunteers to Spain, and they also raised the question of the withdrawal of the volunteers who were already there—declaring that 'the best solution of the volunteer problem would . . . be achieved if it became possible to remove from Spain all non-Spanish participants in the struggle, including political agitators and propagandists, so that the state of affairs of August [1936] would be restored'¹ They were ready, they announced, to collaborate in an immediate consideration of the question of withdrawal by the London Committee.

The virtually identical substance of the German and Italian replies was an additional proof that the two 'Axis' Powers were following a concerted policy in regard to Spain. In point of fact, however, the turn of the years 1936 and 1937 appears to have marked the beginning of a divergence between the methods by which the two Governments pursued their common aim. While they continued to collaborate in furtherance of their object of enabling General Franco to establish himself as the master of Spain, it was Italy and not Germany who shouldered during 1937 the greater part of the burden of giving help to General Franco (help, however, which never proved to be quite extensive enough to tip the scales definitely in his favour). During the first three weeks of December 1936 the relative positions of General Franco's two backers had been the opposite of this, and it has been seen that it was the arrival of German, not Italian, reinforcements which caused the French and British Governments to take the initiative at the beginning of December in an attempt to deal with the problem of volunteers. Italy's decision to remain in the background at that time was probably partly attributable

¹ German note of the 7th January, 1937 (English text in *The Times*, 8th January).

to the fact that negotiations for an Anglo-Italian agreement on Mediterranean questions were in progress at Rome,¹ and the success of the negotiations might have been prejudiced by too much evidence of Italian intervention in Spain. By the last week of December, however, Signor Mussolini had apparently satisfied himself that the negotiations with Great Britain would not break down over the Spanish question, and he may also have feared that General Franco might soon come to rely on Germany's help to a degree which might prove detrimental to Italy's interests. At all events, a first detachment of Italian volunteers landed at Cádiz before Christmas,² and other detachments followed in rapid succession. The published terms of the declaration of the 2nd January, 1937, which was the outcome of the Anglo-Italian conversations, left Signor Mussolini free to follow this path, for while it disclaimed any desire on the part of either Italy or Great Britain 'to modify or . . . to see modified the *status quo* as regards national sovereignty of territory in the Mediterranean area', it made no mention of any undertaking to respect the independence of Spain or refrain from intervention in her internal affairs.³

In the case of Germany, a policy of maintaining her assistance to General Franco at about the level which it had reached by the end of December 1936, but refraining from any substantial increase in German commitments, appears to have been adopted early in 1937 as the result of a compromise between the desires of enthusiastic Nazis and the more cautious views of the military authorities.⁴ Towards the end of December General Faupel, who had been representing the German Government *auprès* General Franco for some time past,⁵ returned to Berlin for consultations with Herr Hitler and his advisers.⁶ General Faupel was believed to have brought a request from General Franco for an additional 60,000 German troops and to have reported on his own account that twice that number would

¹ See the *Survey for 1936*, Part IV, section (ii).

² According to Press reports, 6,000 Italians were disembarked on the 22nd December, 1936, and 4,000 on the 1st January, 1937.

³ Moreover, according to Signor Mussolini's interpretation, the *status quo* might be considered to have been modified by a 'Red' victory in Spain. See the report of his interview with the *Volkischer Beobachter* which is referred to on pp. 179-80, above. ⁴ See pp. 190-1, above.

⁵ General Faupel was subsequently appointed to be the first German Ambassador to the Nationalist Government of Spain. Both he and the Italian Ambassador presented their credentials to General Franco at the beginning of March 1937. General Faupel resigned his post in August 1937, and was succeeded by Herr von Stohrer. The first Italian Ambassador also held his post for only a few months, and his successor presented his credentials at the beginning of August. ⁶ See also p. 190, above.

be needed to ensure a speedy Nationalist victory. At first it appeared as though the German Government might be going to follow the course of intervening in Spain in sufficient strength to guarantee General Franco's triumph; at all events the German reaction to a naval incident which occurred at Christmas time appeared to point in that direction. The German steamer *Palos* was seized in the neighbourhood of Bilbao on the 24th December, and although the vessel itself was released a few days later on the demand of the cruiser *Königsberg*, part of its cargo was retained by the Basque authorities on the ground that it was war material (i.e. celluloid and field telephones), and a Spanish subject who was on board the ship was also detained. Demands for the release of the confiscated portion of the cargo and of the Spanish passenger were not promptly complied with, and during the first days of January German ships in Spanish waters proceeded to take reprisals by capturing three Spanish ships. The naval command then issued an ultimatum to the effect that two of these ships would be handed over to the Nationalists if the German demands were not met within three days—a threat which was duly carried out when the Spanish Government refused to yield.

This high-handed method of dealing with the *Palos* affair was in consonance with the policy which the German Government followed consistently throughout the Spanish war—a policy of reacting with what seemed to other Powers an excessive vigour to any incident which directly affected German interests; but, as it turned out, the action of the German naval command on this occasion was not a portent of more energetic intervention in Spain.

The decision, which appears to have been taken in Berlin at about this time, to keep the extent of the German assistance to General Franco within its existing limits and leave it to Italy to run the more hazardous course of extending her commitments was no doubt the result of a combination of factors, but not least important among these considerations was the firm attitude which was now being taken up in Paris. It has been mentioned that the French Government had let the German Government know before Christmas that they regarded the influx of German troops into Spain as a matter of direct concern to them, and during the next few weeks French anxiety in regard to Germany's ulterior motives was sharpened by alarming reports from Morocco. For some time past French opinion had been perturbed by news of German activity in the Spanish Zone of Morocco. Up to about the middle of December these reports had dealt principally with German economic penetration (the iron mines

in the hinterland of Melilla, for instance, were said to have come completely under German control) and with the organization of propaganda among the Moors. This information had been supplemented before the turn of the year by rumours to the effect that a German military occupation of the Spanish Zone and the *presidios* was in preparation if not in progress. There were reports of German warships patrolling the eastern coast of the Spanish Zone; of the transformation of Ceuta and Melilla into German naval and air bases and of the establishment of an air base at Tatwān; and of preparations for fortifying Ceuta with German heavy guns. Early in January 1937 the rumours became still more circumstantial. It was alleged that small detachments of German troops had begun to arrive and that preparations were being made at Melilla for the accommodation of a large force which was expected on the 10th January.

After an exchange of views with the British Government, the French Government took steps to counter this threat to their interests in Morocco. The situation was discussed by Monsieur Viénot, the deputy Foreign Minister, with the French military and naval authorities on the 7th and 8th January. Thereafter, French troops were concentrated in the northern part of the French Zone in preparation for manoeuvres which had already been arranged. It was also announced that naval manoeuvres would take place off the west coast of Africa, within easy reach of the Straits of Gibraltar, in the middle of January; and a squadron was despatched immediately to the neighbourhood of the Moroccan coast. On the 9th January the French Resident-General in Morocco drew the attention of the Acting High Commissioner in the Spanish Zone to the obligation of Spain, under the terms of the Franco-Spanish treaty of the 27th November, 1912, not to alienate or cede her rights in her sphere of influence in Morocco to any third party,¹ and received an assurance that the Spanish authorities fully recognized the serious international consequences which would follow any breach of the 1912 agreement.

These measures were successful in creating the impression that France was prepared to resist—if necessary by force—any further attempt by Germany to establish herself in the Spanish Zone of

¹ France and Spain were also bound by this treaty not to permit the erection of fortifications or strategic works on the coast of their respective zones, but Ceuta and Melilla were expressly excluded from this provision as places which had been under Spanish sovereignty at the time of the conclusion of a Franco-British treaty regarding Morocco in April 1904. For the international agreements which were the basis of the duties and rights of the Powers in regard to Morocco see the *Survey for 1925*, vol. i, Part II, section (ii); and an article in *The Bulletin of International News*, 23rd January, 1937.

Morocco, and there was a prompt response from Berlin. On the 10th January the foreign service of the official news agency of the Reich announced that it was authorized to state that there were no German troops in Spain or in Spanish Morocco; and at the New Year's reception of the diplomatic corps in Berlin on the 10th January Herr Hitler went out of his way to give the French Ambassador, Monsieur François-Poncet, an assurance that Germany had no designs whatever upon the territorial integrity of Spain or the Spanish possessions—an assurance which Monsieur François-Poncet promptly reciprocated on behalf of his own Government.

These assurances immediately relieved the tension. In the light of later information it appeared that the agitation had in fact been somewhat premature, though it was probably true that the French Government had avoided a serious crisis by a skilful use of publicity accompanied by a show of determination, and had thus warded off a danger that might have become acute in the near future, by moving Germany to change her course before she had committed herself too deeply to draw back without loss of prestige. As a proof of their good faith, the authorities of the Spanish Zone invited French and British military and naval officers to visit Ceuta and Melilla and verify for themselves the absence of German troops, and they also permitted foreign journalists to travel freely through the zone. From the accounts of these eyewitnesses it appeared that the rumours of fortification and of preparations for the accommodation of German troops had been a good deal exaggerated, but that there was substance in the reports that German air bases had been established at various places and that German economic penetration had made considerable progress. The French and British Governments continued to keep a watchful eye on the situation in Morocco, but they found no further cause for special action.¹

¹ The Moroccan question continued to give rise to a certain amount of diplomatic activity during the following weeks. On the 9th February the French and British Governments received from the Spanish Foreign Minister a note announcing that his Government were prepared to consider a modification of the position in North Africa in favour of France and Great Britain, in return for collaboration on the part of those Powers with Spain in settling the affairs of Western Europe, and in the first place for their assistance in putting an end to German and Italian intervention in Spain. This suggestion was somewhat naïve, because it could not have been accepted without a breach of treaty obligations. The Governments to whom it was addressed made no reply for some weeks, but on the 20th March the British Government sent a note intimating that a bargain on the lines proposed was out of the question and expressing the hope that the problem of foreign intervention in Spain would shortly be dealt with by the efforts of the Non-Intervention Committee. A similar reply was sent by the French Government shortly afterwards. Meanwhile,

As soon as the excitement over the situation in Morocco had subsided, the French and British Governments concentrated their attention once more on the problem of volunteers. On the 10th January, 1937, another circular note was sent out from London in reply to the communications which had been received from the Governments who had been approached on this question. In this note His Majesty's Government asked for the views of other Governments on the suggestion that the 'general desire . . . for the exclusion of foreign volunteers and military personnel from Spain would warrant the immediate adoption by each Government within their own territories of the prohibitory measures required for that purpose, even in advance of the establishment of a complete system of control for Spain'. They announced at the same time that they themselves, 'spontaneously and without further delay', were 'issuing a public notice in which attention is drawn to the fact that it is an offence punishable under the Foreign Enlistment Act for British subjects to accept or agree to accept any commission or engagement in the forces of either side, or for any person to recruit volunteers in the United Kingdom for service in Spain'.

The notice warning British subjects that the provisions of the Foreign Enlistment Act of 1870 were applicable in the case of the conflict in Spain was issued on the same day (10th January).¹ The French

on the 3rd March, 1937, General Franco had retorted to the charge of having permitted an undue extension of German influence in the Spanish Zone of Morocco by accusing France of plans for the invasion of that zone. In a note to the signatories of the Algeciras Convention which was despatched on that day he alleged that the French authorities were carrying on intrigues which were calculated to create disturbances on the frontier between the French and the Spanish Zone, and credited them with the intention of exploiting any disturbances which might occur in order to gain control over the Spanish Zone. The British Government's reply to this *démarche* was to the effect that the situation did not appear to them to justify any diplomatic steps by the signatories of the Algeciras Convention, and that questions relating to the infringement of the Franco-Spanish Convention of 1912 would be a matter for France and Spain alone.

¹ A good deal of doubt was expressed in Opposition circles in Great Britain in regard to the legality of this measure. It was argued that the Foreign Enlistment Act applied only in cases where belligerency was recognized, and that if the Government did not desire to recognize the belligerent status of the parties to the Spanish conflict, their proper course would have been to introduce special legislation. This view was not accepted by the Government. According to a statement made by Sir John Simon in the House of Commons at Westminster on the 21st January, the Government had been 'advised not long after the outbreak of the civil war in Spain that it had from the beginning been illegal for any British subject to take service in the combatant forces of either of the parties engaged in that war or for any person to induce others to take such service'. He added that the reason why no proceedings had been taken hitherto for offences against the Foreign Enlistment Act was that 'the

Government followed suit without delay. On the 13th January they notified the British Government that they were about to introduce legislation which would authorize them to prohibit not only the enlistment of French subjects as volunteers on either side in the Spanish civil war but also the recruiting or transport of volunteers in French territory. These measures, the British Government were informed, would be applied without delay on the condition that similar steps were taken simultaneously by the other Powers concerned. The French Government thus signified their readiness to accept the British suggestion that the prohibition of volunteers should be put into force in advance of the establishment of a system of control, but at the same time they made a reservation by which they would regain their freedom of action in respect of volunteers if an effective plan of control was not put into force with general consent within a reasonable time of the agreement on volunteers. The Bill empowering the French Government to take measures to prevent the enlistment, transit and departure of volunteers was adopted unanimously¹ by the Chamber on the 15th January and in the Senate—also by a unanimous vote—on the 21st January.

Of the other four specially interested Powers, Portugal and Russia, but not Germany and Italy, had replied to the British communication of the 10th January before the 21st January. Portugal, in a note of the 12th January, had declared herself ready to enforce laws to prevent the enlistment of volunteers or their transit across Portugal, but had announced that she would 'wait and see the terms of the measures adopted by other countries, so as to be inspired by them and to act likewise'. The Soviet Government, on the 15th January, had informed the British Ambassador in Moscow that their acceptance in principle of a special agreement on volunteers, which had already been notified,² still held good, but that they did not consider it expedient to take 'unilateral prohibitive measures' which, in their view, would 'not only fail to reach the desired aim' but would 'result in intervention in favour of the rebels'. Further progress was therefore dependent on the attitude of Germany and Italy, and those Powers were in no hurry to take a step which would make necessary information and evidence' had 'not been available', and that the purpose of the notice of the 10th January was 'to dispel any idea that such offences can be committed with impunity'.

¹ The unanimity of the deputies was not necessarily a sign that they all regarded the question of volunteers from the same standpoint. While some of them were interested in the prevention of further assistance by Germany and Italy to General Franco, others wished to put a stop to the enlistment of French volunteers in the International Brigades.

² See p. 278, above.

it more difficult to keep up the supply of volunteers who were still flocking to General Franco's standards (now for the most part from Italy). In the middle of January General Göring paid a visit of some ten days' duration to Rome, and the future policy of Germany and Italy in regard to the Spanish situation was among the questions which were exhaustively reviewed in the course of his conversations with Signor Mussolini. On the 23rd January General Goring left Rome for Berlin, and on the 25th the German and Italian replies to the British communication of the 10th January were delivered. These notes, which were again virtually identical in substance, declared that the two Governments had already introduced the legislation necessary to enable them to prohibit the departure of volunteers, and that they were ready to put the measures in question into force, simultaneously with the other Powers concerned, as soon as 'the general lines of an adequate system of control' had 'been agreed upon'. They also referred again to their previous proposal that the withdrawal of volunteers already in Spain should be considered, and in this connexion the Italian note mentioned rumours which had recently been circulated regarding 'a so-called naturalization *en masse* of foreigners who have joined the ranks of one of the parties in conflict'—a measure, it was pointed out, which would frustrate any proposals for the evacuation of all foreigners serving in Spain.

Thus Italy and Germany had not accepted the British suggestion that an agreement to prohibit volunteers should be put into force in advance of the adoption of a system of control, and their stipulation that the general lines of such a system must first be agreed upon was likely to result in a further period of delay. The detailed plan of supervision over traffic with Spain by land and sea which had been worked out by the Chairman's Sub-Committee of the Non-Intervention Committee with the assistance of experts, had, in accordance with the Committee's decision of the 23rd December,¹ been sent to the Spanish Government and to General Franco on the 1st January, 1937, and by the last week of January the replies from the two parties had made it clear that there was no hope of putting the plan into force in its original form (which provided for the stationing of observers in Spanish territory). A preliminary reply from the Spanish Government, which had been received before the 10th January, drew attention to the influx of 'Fascist' volunteers and the delay of Germany and Italy in giving their consent to the proposal for the prohibition of volunteers, and declared that in these circumstances it might be necessary for the Spanish Government to withdraw their

¹ See p. 276, above.

acceptance in principle of a system of supervision, quite apart from the merits of the plan which had now been submitted to them. In a further communication about a week later, however, the Spanish Government intimated that they might be prepared to agree to the plan if it were modified in certain respects. General Franco's régime, which had also replied by the 19th January, declared bluntly that the scheme in its present form was not acceptable to them. Moreover, the Portuguese Government had sent a note on the 2nd January putting forward the view (which had already been expounded by their representative during the discussions in November) that even if the contending parties in Spain were to accept the plan, 'the proposal would in practice create such difficulties to those nations agreeing to be represented on the delegations in Spanish territory that complications were to be feared', and explaining that for this reason the Portuguese Government would refrain from co-operating in the realization of the plan, though they would not formally oppose its adoption. In these circumstances the only hope of progress appeared to lie along the lines of revising the plan so that it could be put into force without the co-operation of the parties to the dispute, and suggestions for such a recasting of the proposals were received from a number of Governments during January. The Soviet Government, for instance, proposed that a control over traffic by sea should be exercised, not by the stationing of observers at ports, but by the naval forces of several or all of the countries represented on the Non-Intervention Committee; and detailed suggestions for improving on the plan which had been submitted to the two parties on the 1st January were also presented by Germany and by Italy in the course of the month.

Proposals for amending the plan of control and for making it applicable to volunteers as well as to war material were under consideration during January by technical experts and by the Chairman's Sub-Committee, and on the 28th January the sub-committee reached agreement provisionally on a revised plan providing for the supervision of the land frontiers of Spain by observers stationed on the non-Spanish side of the frontiers concerned, for the embarkation of observing officers on ships of the participating countries bound for Spanish ports, and for the patrolling of the Spanish coast by warships belonging to the participating Powers. This plan was then submitted to the Governments represented on the Non-Intervention Committee for their consideration, with a request for an early reply. The observations which the Governments duly sent in during the first half of February raised a certain number of obstacles,¹ but the plan for

¹ See pp. 289-92, below.

dividing the responsibility for patrolling the coast of Spain between the Powers was acceptable in its general lines to Germany and Italy, and by the middle of February those Powers had come to the conclusion that it was not worth their while to put any more difficulties in the way of enforcing the agreement to prohibit volunteers (partly, perhaps, as a result of further strong representations from France on the subject of foreign expeditionary forces in Spain; but also possibly because their joint contribution to General Franco's man-power had now reached a level which should, in their view, give him a definite advantage over his opponents,¹ or because they anticipated that they would be able without much difficulty to evade the obligation into which they were about to enter if the need for further reinforcements should arise). At meetings of the Chairman's Sub-Committee on the 15th February and of the Non-Intervention Committee on the 16th, approval was given to the general lines of the new scheme of supervision, subject to the adjustment of certain outstanding questions, and it was decided that the prohibition of the enlistment or despatch of volunteers to serve with either party to the Spanish conflict should come into force simultaneously for all the countries parties to the Non-Intervention Agreement at midnight on the 20th–21st February. A provisional date for the coming into operation of the scheme of control was also fixed; but it proved to be impossible to keep to the date indicated (midnight on the 6th–7th March), and in the event there was a delay of another six weeks before any provisions for supervising the execution of the original Non-Intervention Agreement and of the supplementary agreement on volunteers could be put into force. The latter agreement was, however, duly implemented on the appointed date. The necessary decrees were published in France and Italy on the 19th February and in Russia, Germany and Portugal on the 20th; and from the 21st February onwards the enlistment or despatch to Spain of volunteers from any European country,² with the knowledge or consent of the Government of the volunteers' country of origin, could only be carried out in contravention of that Government's specific international obligations.³

¹ The part played by Italian volunteers in the capture of Málaga in the middle of February (see p. 64) attracted a good deal of attention in the columns of the Press, and this open participation of Italians in an important Nationalist advance was generally thought to have considerable significance. According to the Spanish Government, Italian warships also took their share in bringing about the fall of Málaga.

² For the action taken by the United States see p. 216, above.

³ Reports of the arrival of 'volunteers' in Spain, especially from Italy, continued to be published from time to time in the Press (see also p. 269 n.).

(f) THE SYSTEM OF CONTROL OVER THE EXECUTION OF THE
NON-INTERVENTION AGREEMENT

The difficulties which retarded the putting into operation of the scheme of control until the 20th April, 1937, were partly political and partly technical. On the political side, the most serious obstacles were raised by Portugal and by Russia—by the latter in regard to the plan for controlling sea-borne traffic, and by the former in regard to the supervision of her land frontier with Spain. The obstacle which had been presented, ever since the question of control had first been discussed, by the refusal of the Portuguese Government to consent to international supervision of their land frontier with Spain was at last overcome in the third week of February, when they accepted a proposal by which an adequate number of British observers would be attached to the British Embassy and Consulates 'to see to the rigorous fulfilment of Portugal's obligations'. In a *communiqué* announcing this arrangement which was published in Lisbon on the 20th February it was explained that the Portuguese Government had invited Great Britain to undertake this duty because of their 'confidence in her attitude of impartiality and of the alliance between the two countries'. It was also explained that while the observers would 'be given all facilities' they would not 'possess the powers originally suggested for the international controllers', nor would they 'be recognized as delegates of an international organization'.

The attitude of Russia in regard to maritime control also gave rise

above, footnote 7); but in regard to specific allegations there was the same lack of evidence officially regarded as satisfactory as had been experienced at an earlier stage when the Non-Intervention Committee examined the charges and counter-charges regarding the supply of war material to Spain (see pp. 247 *segg.*, above). For instance, there was a circumstantial report that 10,000 Italians had landed at Cádiz on the 28th February, but when the British Government were questioned on the subject in the House of Commons they declared that they had no information confirming the report. The Italian Government's explanation that another detachment which was said to have landed on the 5th March was a medical unit was officially accepted, and a protest against the allegedly still rising scale of Italian intervention which was made by Monsieur Maisky at a meeting of the Non-Intervention Committee in the last week of March led to an acrimonious exchange of views but not to the establishment of any facts. The British Government, again, told questioners in the House of Commons early in May that they had no information regarding some 1,500 Germans who were said to have landed at San Sebastián on the 26th April, and they returned the same answer when they were interrogated at the end of June on the subject of a report from Gibraltar that several thousand Italians had landed at Málaga. On the 5th July Mr. Eden told the House of Commons that the Non-Intervention Committee had no evidence of foreign nationals arriving in Spain from any quarter since the ban on volunteers had been agreed upon.

to considerable difficulty during February. The Soviet Government had themselves suggested¹ that the original proposal for posting observers at Spanish ports should be replaced by a system under which merchant ships bound for Spain would be subjected to inspection and the warships of the principally interested countries would undertake the task of patrolling the coast of Spain in order to verify whether ships which entered Spanish ports had been inspected. The Russian proposal had been for a system of unified control, to be exercised by one fleet composed of warships belonging to the participating countries; but when the question of maritime control was examined during February by the Chairman's Sub-Committee and by a special sub-committee (consisting of the representatives of the six principally interested Powers) the majority opinion was in favour of an alternative proposal by which the coasts of Spain would be divided into sectors and a supervision of these sectors would be undertaken by the fleets of Great Britain and France in respect of the coast under the control of the Spanish Nationalists, and by the fleets of Germany and Italy in respect of the coast under the Spanish Government's control. In support of this plan it was urged that the allocation of zones for supervision to a Power opposed to the party in possession of the zone appeared 'to present the best practicable method of ensuring an impartial application of the scheme of observation';² but the Soviet representatives continued for some time to press for the adoption of their own proposal, which would have the advantage that the warships of the various Powers could keep a check upon one another as well as upon merchant ships bound for Spain. By the middle of February the Russian Government had reluctantly accepted the view of the other Powers that the scheme of unified control was not practicable, but they then raised a new difficulty by insisting upon their right to share with the four Great Naval Powers the responsibility for patrolling the coasts of Spain. The Russians' demand that a zone should be allocated to them caused the Portuguese Government also to put in a claim to take part in the naval control. The Soviet Government were offered a zone on the north coast of Spain where they would not be in a position to connive in the smuggling of war material to the Spanish Government, and their counter-suggestion that a zone on the east coast of Spain would be more convenient for them as being nearer to their base in the Black Sea was naturally not acceptable to the 'Fascist'

¹ See p. 287, above.

² Mr. Eden in the House of Commons at Westminster on the 3rd March, 1937.

Powers. Finally, at a meeting of the Chairman's Sub-Committee on the 26th February, the Russian representative announced that his Government would waive their right to be represented among the patrolling fleets, and the Portuguese delegate then withdrew his Government's claim likewise. The Portuguese Government next raised difficulties in connexion with Russian ships calling at Portuguese ports, but this objection also was withdrawn on the 6th March, and the maritime part of the control scheme then only awaited the completion of technical details and the passage of legislation making it obligatory for the merchant ships of the participating countries to comply with the provisions of the scheme.

There still remained difficulties of a financial nature. The question of allocating the cost of the scheme of control between the countries represented on the Non-Intervention Committee had been under discussion for several weeks, and by the middle of February the financial aspect of the scheme had been approved in principle, though some of the smaller and poorer countries continued to show themselves reluctant to pay their share.¹ The financial difficulties which were encountered by the organizers of the scheme at this stage were chiefly in regard to the method of payment by various countries of their allotted quota, and here it was the attitude of Germany which constituted the principal obstacle. Germany, whose contribution had been fixed at 16 per cent. of the total cost of the scheme, was anxious to pay the bulk of the sum due from her in Reichsmarks, and offered only a small percentage in foreign currency. This arrangement was not acceptable, but it was not until the 8th March that

¹ It was agreed that the cost of the observation scheme should be defrayed from an international fund to be contributed to by the participating Governments in certain proportions. At the time when it was anticipated that the observation on the Portuguese-Spanish frontier would be conducted by an international staff and its cost defrayed from the international fund, it was estimated that the cost of the scheme for a full year would amount to £898,000. On this basis the Governments of the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Italy and the U.S.S.R. agreed each to contribute 16 per cent. of the total, while the twenty-two other states parties to the Non-Intervention Agreement were invited to contribute the remaining 20 per cent. Under this arrangement the liability of each of the five Governments principally concerned would have amounted to £143,680; but when the supervision of the Portuguese-Spanish frontier was entrusted to British observers it was agreed that the British Government should be allowed to deduct a sum not exceeding £64,000 (representing the expenditure to be incurred by them in respect of the Portuguese-Spanish frontier) from the contribution of £143,680 which they had undertaken to make towards the cost of the international scheme. In addition, the four Powers (the United Kingdom, France, Germany and Italy) taking part in the naval patrol scheme undertook to defray the expenditure thus incurred from their own funds.

Germany finally agreed to pay a first instalment of £10,000 in foreign currency in order to enable the scheme to be put into force. This removed the last serious obstacle, and on that day (the 8th March) the Non-Intervention Committee adopted a resolution recording their final approval of the scheme for supervising traffic with Spain and their agreement that it should be put into force as soon as the legislation required for the operation of maritime supervision had been enacted by the various countries concerned, the necessary appointments to the international corps of observers had been made, and other detailed arrangements had been completed.

The scheme of supervision¹ which finally emerged from these prolonged deliberations was a good deal more elaborate than the plan originally contemplated. Responsibility for the administration of the plan as a whole was to rest with an International Board, composed of representatives nominated by the British, French, German, Italian and Soviet Governments,² with a chairman appointed by the Non-Intervention Committee. The supervision of land frontiers was to be exercised in the case of the Spanish-Portuguese frontier by British observers, in accordance with the arrangement reached in the third week of February,³ and in the case of the other land frontiers by an international body of observers, 130 of whom would be stationed on the Franco-Spanish frontier and five on the short frontier between Gibraltar and Spain. The Franco-Spanish frontier was to be divided into zones, each of which would be placed under the control of an Administrator, who would be responsible to a Chief Administrator in charge of the whole frontier. The observers, who would enjoy diplomatic immunity, would work in close collaboration with the local authorities and would be free to conduct any inquiries which might be necessary to ensure that the Non-Intervention Agreement was not being violated.

The maritime part of the scheme provided that all ships bound for Spain which had the right to fly the flag of participating countries should take on board, at specified ports and roadsteads, observing officers whose duty it would be to supervise the unloading of the ships' cargoes at Spanish ports and verify that they did not carry

¹ The scheme which was approved on the 8th March, 1937, was published, as an annex to the text of the resolution adopted by the Non-Intervention Committee on that day, in the British White Paper, *Spain No. 1 (1937)* [Cmnd. 5390].

² In the scheme adopted on the 8th March it was provided that the International Board should be composed of the representatives of the five Great Powers only, but it was later decided that the representatives of Poland, Greece and Norway should be added to the Board.

³ See p. 289, above.

war material or volunteers. It was estimated that a total of 550 observing officers would be required to carry out these functions. It would be the duty of the patrolling fleets to report the arrival in their zones of any ships which had not been notified to them as having complied with the prescribed procedure, and to draw the attention of the masters of such vessels to the obligation to submit to inspection which was imposed upon them by the laws of their own country. The commanders of patrolling warships were to have the right to verify the identity of any ship proceeding from a port of any of the participating countries or flying the flag of one of them, and might order such ships to stop, board them and examine their papers, but they were not to have the right of search in such cases and the only action which they could take would be to report the incident to their own Government, who would be responsible for passing on the information to the Non-Intervention Committee and to the Government of the country whose flag the ship in question was flying. The patrolling warships would carry out their duties only within a distance of ten sea miles from any point on the Spanish coast. The zones allocated to the four Powers were as follows.¹

The United Kingdom: The north coast of Spain from the French frontier to Cape Busto; the south coast from the Portuguese frontier to Cape De Gata;

¹ There had been a certain amount of discussion in committees on the desirability of providing that Great Britain (as that Power of the four which was least suspect of partiality) should take over the supervision of any portion of the coast which might pass from the control of the Spanish Government to that of the Nationalists, or *vice versa*, in the course of military operations on land. No provision for this contingency was made in the scheme adopted on the 8th March, 1937, but it was stated that the allocation of the zones 'at the outset of the scheme' would be as indicated. When commenting on the scheme in the House of Lords on the 10th March, 1937, Lord Plymouth remarked that 'it was likely as the result of experience or of events in Spain that the zones as now allotted might not remain suitable, and that modifications would have to be made'. Another question which was left open was that of the application of a system of observation to the Canary Islands. The Non-Intervention Committee had agreed in principle that the system ought to apply to all parts of Spanish territory, but there were special difficulties in the case of the Canary Islands. 'There was an enormous number of liners and ships on cruises calling at the Canary Islands, and to place observers on all these would necessitate a very great increase in the staff of the Board and would seriously increase the expenditure of that body. . . . Furthermore, it seemed extremely unlikely that the Canary Islands . . . would be made use of to import into Spain war material or volunteers in contravention of the agreement.' (Lord Plymouth in the House of Lords on the 10th March, 1937.) It was therefore agreed that the Canary Islands should not be included in the system in the first place, but that further efforts should be made to devise means of closing this possible gap in the scheme. These efforts were unavailing, and the Canary Islands remained outside the scope of the observation system.

France: The north-west coast of Spain from Cape Busto to the Portuguese frontier, the Spanish Moroccan coast, the islands of Iviza and Majorca.

Germany: The south-east coast of Spain from Cape de Gata to Cape Oropesa.

Italy: The east coast of Spain from Cape Oropesa to the French frontier, the island of Minorca

The system of control which had finally been agreed upon by the twenty-seven Governments represented on the Non-Intervention Committee was by no means ideal from the point of view of those Governments who were genuinely anxious to put a stop to the flow of munitions and men into Spain from any quarter. The most obvious gap was that created by the impossibility of devising any practicable scheme for controlling the air routes to Spain, by this means additional aircraft could be (and undoubtedly was) sent to the two parties in Spain in quantities which might be inconsiderable on any one occasion but which might amount in the aggregate to substantial reinforcements. In regard to the control of the land frontiers, the arrangements which had been agreed upon were considered likely effectively to prevent smuggling at the main railway and road crossings, but it was recognized that no system of control, whether national or international, could prevent the passage of small consignments of war material, and still less the passage of parties of volunteers, across a land frontier. The maritime observation scheme, on the other hand, was considered likely to be fully effective so far as the ships of the participating countries were concerned, since the observing officers on such ships would be in a position to check the unloading of cargoes at Spanish ports. At the same time, it was pointed out by critics of the plan that a ship which did not comply with the prescribed procedure would not even suffer the penalty of publicity but would merely be reported to the Non-Intervention Committee and to its own Government for punitive action. This arrangement, it was argued, could only be expected to be effective on the assumption that the Governments to whom such reports were made would be genuinely concerned to do their part in the prevention of smuggling—an assumption which it was certainly not safe to make in respect of all the Governments represented on the Non-Intervention Committee. The most serious loophole in the naval observation scheme, however, was presented by the fact that it had been found necessary to dispense with the co-operation of the two Spanish parties to the war, so that ships flying the Spanish flag would

not be subjected to the procedure of observation¹ This state of affairs offered patent possibilities for Governments or individuals desirous of evading the provisions of the Non-Intervention Agreement—especially as it would be difficult to prevent a sudden augmentation of the merchant fleets flying the flag of Republican or of Nationalist Spain by the transfer to those fleets of ships formerly flying other flags² There was also another category of merchant ships which would not be subject to supervision—those flying the flags of non-European states which were not members of the Non-Intervention Committee. Thus, for instance, the delivery of war material from Mexico to the Spanish Government would not be affected so long as it was carried in Spanish or in non-European ships

The Non-Intervention Committee agreed on the 8th March that the system which has been outlined above should be put into operation in three stages. The first stage would be completed when the principal officials—Chief Administrators, Administrators, Deputy Administrators and their personal staffs—had been appointed and had taken up their posts. The second stage would begin when a sufficient number of subordinate officials had been recruited and despatched to their posts to enable the scheme to be put into operation on a skeleton basis. The third and final stage would be reached when the full complement of subordinate officials had arrived at their posts

When the scheme was adopted on the 8th March, it was hoped that it would be possible to complete the first two stages by the 13th March, and the four Naval Powers which were to undertake the task of patrolling the coasts of Spain intimated that they would be

¹ The Spanish Government informed the Non-Intervention Committee in the third week of March that they would not permit any interference by any foreign warship with ships flying the Spanish flag; and at the same time they expressed their misgivings lest German warships should take advantage of the opportunity which the control of a patrol zone would give them to continue activities (such as espionage) on behalf of the Nationalists, and even to commit acts of hostility on their own account against territory under the Spanish Government's control.

² On the 15th March, 1937, Lord Cranborne was asked in the House of Commons whether 'under the control plan . . . any provisions existed to prevent the rebels or the Spanish Government buying ships with which to import cargoes of arms or volunteers and thereby defeating the object of the scheme'. He replied: 'The sale of ships to the contending parties in Spain is not prohibited by the Non-Intervention Agreement, but I can assure the hon. member that the point which he raises will not be lost sight of.' At a meeting of the Chairman's Sub-Committee on the 23rd March, a discussion took place on the possibility of imposing restrictions on the movements of Spanish merchant ships; but it was not found possible, on this or on any subsequent occasion, to take effective action to close this gap.

ready to take up their duties on that date. This forecast proved to be too optimistic. The first essential step was the appointment of the Chairman of the Non-Intervention Board and of the higher administrative officials, and even these preliminary arrangements involved a certain delay—especially as the first person who had been suggested for the post of chairman of the Board declined the honour.¹ On the 12th March, however, the Non-Intervention Committee constituted the Non-Intervention Board with Vice-Admiral van Dulm (Netherlands) as its chairman and appointed another Dutchman, Rear-Admiral Olivier, as Chief Administrator of the observation scheme at sea. Another small 'neutral' country, Denmark, provided the Chief Administrator of the scheme for supervising the Franco-Spanish frontier, in the person of Colonel Lunn. The International Board held its first meeting in London on the 17th March, when it was announced that the organization was proceeding satisfactorily, and on the 24th March the Non-Intervention Committee asked the Non-Intervention Board to report at the earliest possible moment the date on which they would be able to bring the plan into operation.

The chief reason for delay at this stage was the necessity of awaiting the enactment of legislation, in all the twenty-seven countries concerned, which would make it obligatory for merchant ships flying the flags of those countries to comply with the provisions of the scheme and call at specified ports or roadsteads in order to take on board official observers. In the United Kingdom, the Merchant Shipping (Spanish Frontiers Observation) Bill which gave effect to the agreement of the 8th March was introduced into the House on the 10th March and passed its third reading on the 18th, but in the other countries principally concerned the process took longer. The necessary decrees were not published in France, Germany and Portugal until the 9th April, and it was not until the 13th April that the Italian Bill was approved by the Cabinet. On the 6th April Mr. Eden had informed a questioner in the House of Commons that the International Board had 'completed the first stage of its arrangements for the establishment of the scheme and that the first groups of officials' had 'already left for their posts'. An advance party of British observers had in fact been waiting to take up their duties in Portugal since the 9th March. On the 15th April the Chairman's Sub-Committee was informed by the International Board that the

¹ This was Vice-Admiral de Graaf, a former Chief of Naval Staff of the Netherlands. A few weeks earlier Admiral de Graaf had refused an invitation to succeed Mr. Sean Lester as League of Nations High Commissioner at Danzig (see the *Survey for 1936*, p. 572).

second stage had now almost been completed and that the scheme could be put into operation on a skeleton basis at midnight on the 19th–20th April, 1937. There were no more hitches at the last moment, and from the 20th April a system of supervision was in force on the land frontiers of Spain, and merchant ships flying the flags of the participating countries were under an obligation to take observers on board before they entered Spanish waters. The appointment, and despatch to their posts, of subordinate members of the International Board's staff continued for another ten days, but the organization had been completed by the 30th April, and on that day the scheme was brought into full operation.

(g) THE QUESTION OF WITHDRAWING VOLUNTEERS FROM SPAIN
(MARCH–MAY 1937)

As soon as the plan of control had been adopted by the Non-Intervention Committee on the 8th March, 1937, the question of withdrawing the volunteers who were already in Spain came to the front as the problem for which it was most important to find a solution. In this connexion, however, difficulties arose of an even more serious kind than those which the Non-Intervention Committee had already encountered in its discussion of the prohibition of volunteers and of the establishment of supervision, and the negotiations dragged on for many months without apparently bringing the Powers any nearer to an agreement on this crucial question.

It will be recalled that the German and Italian Governments in their notes of the 7th January, 1937,¹ had referred to the desirability of an arrangement for the withdrawal of all the non-Spanish nationals serving on either side in the Spanish war, and in their notes of the 25th January² they had again declared that they were ready to join in a discussion of this question by the Non-Intervention Committee. A majority of the members of the Committee had agreed in thinking that the question of prohibiting the enlistment and despatch of volunteers must be given priority, and when an agreement on that question had been put into force on the 20th February³ it was not a cause of any great surprise that the 'Fascist' Powers should not have exhibited any eagerness to make progress towards an agreement on withdrawal—though their attitude gave colour to the suspicion that their main object in raising the question in January had been to delay the negotiations on the prohibition of volunteers.

On the 1st March Lord Plymouth suggested at a meeting of the

¹ See p. 279, above.

² See p. 286, above.

³ See p. 288, above.

Chairman's Sub-Committee that the time was now ripe for a discussion on the withdrawal of foreign nationals, and this suggestion was supported by the French Ambassador in London, Monsieur Corbin, by the Russian delegate and by the representatives of Belgium, Czechoslovakia and Sweden. The representatives of Germany, Italy and Portugal, however, reverted to the attitude which they had adopted earlier¹ and insisted that the withdrawal of volunteers must not be discussed apart from other forms of indirect intervention, such as financial assistance. On the 8th March, after the Non-Intervention Committee had expressed approval of the plan of control, it adopted a resolution laying down the lines on which its future work was to proceed, and the terms of this resolution indicated that the 'Fascist' Powers had won this preliminary round

The International Committee propose now to pursue the examination of the question of extending the Non-Intervention Agreement to prohibit other forms of indirect intervention, including the grant to either party in Spain of any form of financial aid, and the entry into that country of persons of non-Spanish nationality for any purpose likely to prolong or embitter the present conflict.² The Committee propose also to consider whether, and if so in what manner, it might be possible to arrange for the withdrawal from Spain of all non-Spanish nationals engaged, either directly or indirectly, in the present conflict in that country.

As has already been mentioned,³ the discussion of financial assistance to the parties in Spain, which had begun some weeks earlier, was not proceeding smoothly, and it was evident that if the discussion of the withdrawal of volunteers was to be dependent upon the progress made in the Financial Sub-Committee, it was likely to be postponed indefinitely. In the third week of March Mr. Eden discussed with the Ambassadors of the other principally interested Powers the best means of speeding up the negotiations, and it was agreed that the Chairman's Sub-Committee, at its next meeting on the 23rd March, should consider what steps could be taken in the matter of withdrawing volunteers.

Meanwhile, developments in Spain had given the situation a new turn. In the middle of March Italian troops who were serving with the Nationalist forces on the Madrid front had suffered defeat at

¹ See pp. 274-5, above.

² There was a brief discussion, at the meeting of the Chairman's Sub-Committee on the 23rd March, of the possibility of extending the prohibition of volunteers to cover propaganda agents and other persons 'likely to prolong or embitter the conflict', but this was one of the problems which did not get beyond the stage of preliminary discussion during the period under review.

³ See p. 277 *n.*, above.

Guadalajara,¹ and by the time when the Chairman's Sub-Committee met on the 23rd March, vivid descriptions of an Italian rout were beginning to appear in the columns of the international Press. This blow to Italian prestige was followed by an immediate stiffening of the Italian Government's attitude towards the withdrawal of volunteers. On the 23rd March, in reply to a suggestion by Lord Plymouth that the possibility of withdrawing foreign volunteers from Spain should be referred to a technical sub-committee for expert examination, Count Grandi told his colleagues on the Chairman's Sub-Committee that, in his opinion, the question of the withdrawal of volunteers was not a technical problem but a general one, and that a discussion in a technical sub-committee would not be likely to produce practical results. He added that he was not in a position at that particular moment to enter upon a discussion of this problem. In the course of the discussion which ensued, the Soviet Ambassador pointed out that this attitude was in sharp contrast with Italy's previously declared policy in regard to foreign volunteers. Thereupon Count Grandi said that it was his personal hope that no Italian volunteer would leave Spain till the end of the war. This caused consternation in the sub-committee, which, after a brief further discussion, agreed to adjourn in order to enable the representatives to report to their respective Governments the situation which had arisen.

On the following day there was a plenary session of the Non-Intervention Committee at which, after a number of questions relating to the recently adopted scheme for the observation of the Spanish land and sea frontiers had been satisfactorily disposed of, Monsieur Maisky proceeded to deliver a sharp attack upon Italy, whom he accused of 'ever-increasing military intervention in Spanish affairs'. Monsieur Maisky said that, according to his Government's information, the number of Italian volunteers in Spain in the middle of February was not less than 60,000, and that they had reason to believe that this number had since been substantially increased. These 'volunteers', he declared, arrived 'in military formations under the command of Italian officers', and they were 'well supplied with all sorts of arms and munitions of Italian make'. Monsieur Maisky's charges were based upon detailed allegations contained in a note dated the 13th March from the Spanish Government, and he asked the Non-Intervention Committee to send a special commission of investigation to Spain to examine the situation and test the validity of the accusations against Italy. Count Grandi reserved his

¹ See pp. 65-6, above.

Government's reply to these accusations, and it was agreed that the matter should be referred to the Chairman's Sub-Committee.

Another meeting of the sub-committee was not, however, summoned for three weeks, and in the meantime the questions at issue were handled through diplomatic channels. It was recognized that the Italian Government's refusal to discuss the withdrawal of volunteers, combined with the Russian accusations against Italy, had created a situation of extreme gravity which threatened to lead to the break-down of the non-intervention policy. During the last week of March a series of diplomatic conversations was initiated in which France and Great Britain endeavoured to persuade Germany and Italy on the one side and Russia on the other that the interests of European peace demanded a greater display of conciliation on their part and greater integrity in their fulfilment of their undertakings not to intervene in Spain. The response of Germany to these representations was, it was reported, sufficiently favourable to earn commendation from Monsieur Delbos,¹ and even Italy—smarting though she was under her defeat at Guadalajara and resenting in particular the deduction, which was freely though perhaps unjustifiably² drawn abroad, that the Fascist régime had not greatly improved the average Italian's capacities as a fighting man—had given the British Government an assurance before the end of March that no more volunteers would be sent to Spain. On the subject of the recall of volunteers Italy was more recalcitrant, but by the third week of April her objections to the discussion of that question had been waived. By this time French and British influence had also induced Moscow to modify its attitude, and Monsieur Maisky had been persuaded not to persist in his demand that a special commission should be sent to Spain to establish the truth of the allegations regarding Italian intervention. The atmosphere was therefore much less tense when the Chairman's Sub-Committee met again on the 15th April³ than it had been three weeks earlier. The question of the nature and extent of Italian intervention in Spain was allowed to drop, and a first step forward in the matter of recalling volunteers was taken through the appointment of a technical sub-committee to work out plans for withdrawing all non-Spanish nationals who were engaged either directly or indirectly in

¹ According to Press reports, Monsieur Delbos congratulated the German Ambassador in Paris on the manner in which his Government were carrying out their undertakings in regard to non-intervention.

² See p. 66, above.

³ It was at this meeting that the decision was taken to bring the system of control into operation on a skeleton basis at midnight on the 19th–20th April.

the Spanish civil war. Subsequent events were to prove, however, that the appearance of an advance towards a solution of this problem was illusory, and that the Italian *volte face* which had enabled the consideration of the question to be resumed had been a diplomatic feint which did not reflect any change of policy.

The special sub-committee on the withdrawal of volunteers held its first meeting on the 26th April, and on the 26th May it submitted to the Non-Intervention Committee a detailed report on the measures to be taken by Governments for the recall of their nationals from Spain, and on ways and means of effecting the withdrawal under adequate supervision.

During the first three weeks of May the Chairman's Sub-Committee had been engaged for the most part in the examination of questions arising out of interference by the Nationalist naval forces with foreign ships¹ and in discussing the possibility of an appeal to the Spanish Government and to the Nationalists to conduct their hostilities with greater regard for humanitarian principles² (the motive for this appeal was to be found in the bombing of Guernica and other Basque towns and villages in April,³ which had brought Germany, whose aeroplanes had wrought this wanton destruction, once more into bad odour). When the preliminary technical work on a plan for withdrawing volunteers from Spain was approaching completion, however, it became necessary to give attention to the means by which such a plan could be put into force; and before the 21st May the British Government had 'made confidential inquiries of the other principal Governments concerned to ascertain whether those Governments would join with them in an approach to both contending parties in Spain', the objective of which would 'be strictly limited to asking them to agree to a temporary cessation of hostilities on all Spanish fronts for a period sufficient to enable' the withdrawal of foreign nationals 'to be arranged'.⁴ By the end of May four of the five Governments concerned had complied with the British request for an expression of an opinion on this question. The French Government responded promptly to the British initiative and gave the idea of a truce their blessing. The response from Germany was non-committal rather than unfavourable; the principle of an armistice was approved, but emphasis was laid on the practical difficulties of

¹ See pp. 305 *seqq.*, below. ² See pp. 380-1. ³ See pp. 68 *seqq.*, above.

⁴ Mr. Eden, in the League Council on the 28th May, 1937. Mr. Eden added an expression of regret that 'the soundings upon which H M. Government were engaged with the other Governments . . . should have become public property at so early a stage'. This had 'led to a certain element of confusion which' could not 'but further complicate' the task.

arranging for the withdrawal of volunteers—especially of those serving with the Spanish Government's forces Portugal's reply was more discouraging than that of Germany, though she did not refuse to consider the suggestion Russia, who made no answer for several days, appeared to think that an armistice at the moment would favour General Franco, and while she announced her agreement in principle she raised difficulties which were likely to prove insuperable by stipulating that the initiative in suspending hostilities must be taken by the Nationalists, as the party which had been responsible for starting them, and that the volunteers to be withdrawn from General Franco's forces must include the Moorish levies The Italian Government had not made their views known officially before the end of May, but their attitude, as it was defined in the Press, was that there could be no question of a suspension of hostilities before the Nationalists' campaign in the north-east, which was the principal field of operations at the time, had been brought to a successful conclusion by the conquest of Bilbao¹ The reaction of the two parties in Spain to the proposal (which had not yet been put to them formally, but which was being given publicity in the Press) was also not encouraging. Both showed resentment at a suggestion which was interpreted at first as another attempt to bring about a peaceful settlement by mediation, and even after this misconception had been removed it was clear that the suggestion of a truce was quite unacceptable to the Nationalists. As soon as the Spanish Government realized that General Franco was opposed to the suggestion, they intimated that they were prepared, for their part, to fall in with it, but this was a gesture that cost them little, since the adherence of their opponents would obviously be required if the proposal was to be put into force

The prospect for a successful outcome of the British *démarche* on the subject of a truce was therefore not good when, on the 28th May, the question of withdrawing volunteers from Spain formed one of the main topics of discussion at a meeting of the League of Nations Council at Geneva. A few days before the opening of the ninety-seventh session of the Council on the 24th May, the Spanish Government had asked that the situation in Spain should be discussed. At the meeting in the previous December, Señor Álvarez del Vayo had reserved his Government's right to raise the matter again at a later stage,² and they considered that this course was now justified by the development of foreign intervention in Spain. As had been the case in December, the main object of the Spanish Government

¹ See pp. 72–3, above.

² See p. 267, above.

was to use the means of publicity which Geneva afforded, and for this purpose they again made a collection of documents containing recent evidence of foreign intervention and published them in the form of a White Book while the Council was in session.¹ These documents, according to Señor Álvarez del Vayo (who represented the Spanish Government at the Council meeting, though he no longer held the office of Foreign Minister), proved irrefutably:

- (1) The existence on Spanish territory of complete units of the Italian Army, whose personnel, material, liaison and command are Italian;
- (2) The fact that these Italian military units behave in the sectors assigned to them as a veritable army of occupation;
- (3) The existence of services organized by the Italian Government for these military units on Spanish territory as if they were in a finally conquered country;
- (4) The active participation of the most eminent personalities in the Italian Government, who have addressed messages to the invading forces, giving them advice and encouragement in their aggression.

The ninety-seventh session of the League Council was attended by the Foreign Ministers of the Great Powers, but the fact that they could speak with greater authority on the Spanish question than their substitutes who had attended the December session did not make the debate any less inconclusive than it had been on that earlier occasion. Señor Álvarez del Vayo himself dealt at some length with the 'irruption into a sovereign and independent country of 70,000 or 80,000 Italians', but he laid even greater stress on the bombing of Guernica, which, as he remarked, had 'lighted a salutary flame of indignation throughout the world'. As for the scheme of control, Señor Álvarez del Vayo refrained from analysing its results, 'out of respect for the good intentions of some of its authors', but he expressed the opinion that it was 'destined to share the fate of the non-intervention policy as practised hitherto'. On the subject of withdrawing volunteers, he declared categorically that his Government 'would be prepared to make . . . this fresh sacrifice' and that the 'discipline of true volunteers would make it certain that there would be no practical difficulty in the way'.

Señor Álvarez del Vayo's arguments were supported wholeheartedly by Monsieur Litvinov, who laid stress on the danger that the success of 'Fascist' intervention in Spain might be followed by a similar process in some other country. Monsieur Litvinov also declared that his Government would 'support every and any action calculated to withdraw all non-Spanish elements from the ranks of

¹ The White Book was published as Special Supplement No. 165 to the *Official Journal*.

the combatants in Spain, so that the struggle going on there should be settled by the Spaniards themselves'. MM. Delbos and Eden were both concerned to prove, despite the Spanish Government's contention to the contrary, that there had been an improvement in the situation since the previous December 'It would be impossible to deny', declared Mr. Eden, 'that real progress has been made since that date, and in these days, when the possibilities of international collaboration are so frequently denied, it is as well to recall this fact' Both the French and the British Foreign Minister, also, referred to the humanitarian aspect of the conflict and to the international efforts which were being made in that connexion, and appealed to the Council to support those efforts as well as the attempt which was being made to reach agreement on the withdrawal of non-Spanish nationals from Spain.

A resolution on these lines was drafted at a private meeting of the Council during the evening of the 28th May and was adopted unanimously at a public session on the following day. The resolution confirmed the principles and recommendations set forth in the resolution of the 12th December, 1936, and noted that 'the development of the situation in Spain' did not 'seem to suggest that the steps taken by Governments' had 'as yet had the full effect desired'. The coming into force of the scheme of supervision was also noted, while 'very great satisfaction was expressed with the 'action taken by the London Non-Intervention Committee with a view to the withdrawal of all non-Spanish combatants taking part in the struggle in Spain'.

The resolution went on as follows:

[The Council] expresses the firm hope that such action will be taken in consequence of this initiative as may ensure with the utmost speed the withdrawal from the struggle of all the non-Spanish combatants participating therein; this measure is at present, in the Council's opinion, the most effective remedy for a situation the great gravity of which, from the standpoint of the general peace, it feels bound to emphasise and the most certain means of ensuring the full application of the policy of non-intervention.

Finally, the resolution declared that the Council condemned 'the employment in the Spanish struggle of methods contrary to international law and the bombing of open towns'; and expressed 'high appreciation of the efforts of unofficial institutions and certain Governments to save civilians, especially women and children, from these terrible dangers'.

On the very day on which this resolution was adopted at Geneva, aeroplanes belonging to the Spanish Government bombed the German

battleship *Deutschland* in the Mediterranean, with the result that some thirty German seamen lost their lives and many more were injured. This incident was the starting-point of a series of crises which paralysed the activities of the Non-Intervention Committee for some weeks. It was not until the middle of July that the question of withdrawing volunteers came to the front again, when it formed one item in a series of interrelated proposals which were placed before the Non-Intervention Committee by the British Government.¹

(h) NAVAL INCIDENTS AND THE WITHDRAWAL OF GERMANY AND ITALY FROM THE NAVAL PATROL (MAY-JUNE 1937)

Up to the end of May 1937, German and Italian shipping in Spanish waters—whether warships or merchant vessels—had been relatively free from the interference which was a cause of constant anxiety to the Governments of many other countries. The explanation of the comparative immunity of German and Italian ships was no doubt to be found partly in the fact that the Spanish Government did not possess the naval strength which enabled their opponents to intercept foreign ships and force them to change their course: and partly in that Government's fear that such action on their part might give rise to reprisals of the kind which had followed the seizure of the German ship *Palos* in December.² During the early months of the year 1937 some instances of attacks on foreign ships by Spanish Government aeroplanes did occur, but these were apparently the result of a genuine misunderstanding.³ By the beginning of April, however, the Spanish Government's belief that German and Italian warships were helping General Franco by engaging in espionage⁴ had apparently led them to adopt a less prudent policy. At all events, the German Government subsequently reported⁵ that men-of-war belonging to the Spanish Government had 'threatened' the *Graf Spee* at the beginning of April and the cruiser *Leipzig* on the 11th May.

During the first five months of 1937, however, the maritime activities which caused most concern were those of the Spanish Nationalists. The sufferers from General Franco's maritime policy included Russian, French, British, Dutch and Scandinavian ships.

¹ See pp. 331 *seqq.*, below.

² See p. 281, above.

³ See p. 310, below.

⁴ See p. 261 and *n.*, above. Accusations of this kind were made again by the Spanish Government in a note of the 22nd March, 1937, containing their observations on the plan of control.

⁵ In their note of the 31st May on the *Deutschland* incident (see p. 312, below).

According to a statement which was made by the Russian representative at a meeting of the Non-Intervention Committee on the 5th May, 84 Russian ships were interfered with between the 30th October, 1936, and the 10th April, 1937, and only one of these vessels was bound for a Spanish port. The Soviet authorities do not appear to have taken steps to prevent vessels flying the Soviet flag from suffering molestation,¹ and little or no publicity was given to incidents involving Russian ships. The interference with French and British merchant ships during this period continued on a serious scale, despite the instructions which had been issued by the British Admiralty and the French Ministry of Marine at the end of November 1936² to the effect that British and French warships should go to the assistance of merchant vessels which asked for protection against General Franco's warships. Early in January 1937 the British naval authorities protested to General Franco against the molestation of two merchant ships at the turn of the year, but this did not prevent another attempt in the middle of January to divert a British ship (the *Bramhill*) from its course—an attempt which was foiled by the intervention of the cruiser *Sussex*. In March Spanish Nationalist warships again intercepted several British vessels (though they were not always successful in making them change their course), and on the 29th March a statement broadcast from the Nationalist headquarters warned British ships to respond promptly to signals from Spanish warships—alleging, in justification of the stopping of British ships, that certain foreign vessels carrying munitions were adopting the practice of flying the British flag. There were also several instances during March of French merchant ships being taken to Nationalist ports or of their being bombed or fired upon when they ignored orders to stop. At the beginning of April instructions were again issued to French warships to go to the assistance of merchant vessels and prevent, if necessary by the use of force, any interference with them outside the three-mile limit, and in the middle of the month a French destroyer rescued a merchant ship which a Nationalist gunboat had tried to bring to a halt by gun-fire.

The situation in regard to British shipping became still more acute early in April in consequence of the Nationalists' attempt to blockade Bilbao. By the beginning of that month the Nationalist forces under

¹ In December 1936 great indignation had been expressed in the Russian Press at the sinking of a Soviet ship—the *Komsomol*—on the 14th December, and it appeared then to be the intention of the Soviet Government to take reprisals if similar incidents occurred in future. They were said to have abandoned this intention at the instance of the French Government, who pointed out the dangers inherent in a policy of individual reprisals.

² See pp. 259-60, above.

General Mola were closing in on Bilbao,¹ and it became a matter of considerable importance to the Nationalist commanders to prevent supplies of food from reaching the beleaguered town by sea and thus helping the Basques to maintain their resistance. On the 6th April the *Thorpehall*, with a cargo of food, was stopped outside Bilbao by a Spanish Nationalist cruiser, but the intervention of British destroyers enabled the ship to enter the port.² The Nationalist naval commander then announced that it was his intention to prevent any supplies from reaching Bilbao, and a formal notification to the same effect was later sent to the British Ambassador at Hendaye, who was informed that any attempt to break the blockade would be resisted by the Nationalists whatever the consequences might be. During the next few days another British merchantman on its way to Bilbao was successfully intercepted, and several more then put in to St. Jean de Luz and asked for an escort to enable them to reach Bilbao and discharge their cargoes of provisions. The British authorities were thus faced with the necessity of deciding whether or not British merchant ships desirous of entering the port of Bilbao were to be assisted by British warships in running a *de facto* blockade by a party whose belligerency—and therefore, *a fortiori*, its right to impose a blockade—was not recognized by the British Government.

The ships at St. Jean de Luz were advised to remain there for the time being,³ and on the 11th April⁴ a meeting of the Cabinet was summoned to examine the situation and decide on the policy to be followed. Ministers were impressed by the dangers which British ships would incur if they attempted to enter the harbour of Bilbao. They understood that there was 'constant and serious risk to shipping in Bilbao harbour from bombing by aircraft'. In addition, 'on account of the laying of mines by both sides in the approaches to Bilbao', there was believed to be 'grave risk to any ship seeking to enter the harbour, unless minesweeping' was 'first carried out within Spanish territorial waters'.⁵

The decision which the Cabinet reached in these circumstances was

¹ See pp. 68 *seqq.*, above.

² Four Spanish warships and the German pocket battleship *Graf Spee* were in the neighbourhood at the time, but they moved off when the British destroyers cleared for action.

³ The Board of Trade in London had already, on the 8th April, advised shipowners to warn the masters of their vessels not to enter Basque ports.

⁴ This was a Sunday, and it was the second time within six months that a Cabinet meeting had been summoned on that day of the week to take a decision on an urgent question of policy arising out of an attempt of the Spanish Nationalists to impose a naval blockade (see also p. 258, above).

⁵ Mr. Baldwin in the House of Commons on the 12th April, 1937.

announced by the Prime Minister in the House of Commons on the 12th April:

H M. Government . . . cannot recognize or concede belligerent rights and they cannot tolerate any interference with British shipping at sea. They are, however, warning British shipping that in view of conditions at present prevailing in the neighbourhood of Bilbao they should not, for practical reasons, and in view of risks against which it is at present impossible to protect them, go into that area so long as these conditions prevail.

It was announced at the same time that the battle-cruiser *Hood* had been sent to the north coast of Spain, since it was 'the desire of H.M. Government that, having regard to the difficult position which had arisen in those waters, an adequate naval force under the direct command of an officer of flag rank' should 'be available'.

The policy thus outlined was strongly criticized in Opposition quarters in Great Britain and was the subject of a debate on a motion of censure in the House of Commons on the 14th April. The argument that it would be necessary to go to the length of mine-sweeping in order to protect British ships which wished to enter Bilbao, and that this would be equivalent to giving direct help to the Basque forces (to whom supplies of food were as essential as supplies of munitions) was met by the counter-argument that the Government were assisting General Franco by accepting in fact his claim to a right of blockade which they denied in principle, and thus helping him to starve the Basques into surrender. Members of the Opposition were also less inclined than the Government to accept the evidence regarding the dangers of the approach to Bilbao, and they gave greater credence to the assurances of the Basque authorities that there were no mines in the entrance to the harbour and that the shore batteries could protect any merchant ships within Spanish territorial waters.

Subsequent events certainly appeared to prove that, after the middle of April at any rate, the risk of entering Bilbao was less serious than the British authorities had judged it to be when they issued their warning to shipping. The masters of the British steamers which were held up at French ports became increasingly restive as time passed and the value of their cargoes of foodstuffs deteriorated, and for some days in the second half of April the exploits and intentions of the three Captains Jones at St. Jean de Luz—they were distinguished under titles derived from their cargoes. 'Ham and Eggs', 'Potato' and 'Corn-Cob'—were the subject of much lively comment and conjecture in the British Press. Finally, on the evening of the

19th April, the *Seven Seas Spray* slipped out of St. Jean de Luz, disregarded the warning of British warships,¹ evaded any Spanish warships in the neighbourhood and docked triumphantly at Bilbao on the morning of the 20th April. The success of the *Seven Seas Spray* confirmed the growing belief of the owners and masters of British merchant ships that any perils attending the voyage to Bilbao now lay not inside but outside territorial waters,² where, according to the British Government's declared policy, they were entitled to protection from interference. The official attitude of the British authorities continued to be that they could not advise shipowners that their ships would be able to enter Bilbao, but no more difficulties were put in the way of ships which desired to call at that port, and they were given full protection outside the three-mile limit by British warships. On the 23rd April, for instance, three ships were accompanied by the *Hood* past Spanish warships which had attempted to intercept them, and thereafter until the fall of Bilbao in the middle of June British trade with that port was carried on unchallenged though in greatly diminished volume.

Meanwhile, other Governments besides those of France and Great Britain had been finding increasing cause for concern in the molestation of their merchant ships in Spanish waters. Between November and April, eighteen Dutch vessels (most of them carrying cargoes of fruit) had been stopped by the Nationalists and their cargoes had been confiscated; during the same period twenty-six Danish ships were seized; while nearly thirty Norwegian ships were reported to have been captured by the end of the first week in April. The Dutch Government, early in March, sent a cruiser to escort merchantmen, and in the middle of the month the Foreign Minister announced in the Senate that warships had been ordered to defend merchant vessels, and that the seizure of such vessels would be regarded as an act of piracy. The Norwegian Government also decided in the second week of April to send a warship to Spanish waters. The Governments of the four Scandinavian countries consulted together

¹ It was recorded that a British destroyer which, having ascertained that the *Seven Seas Spray* was bound for Bilbao, warned her master, Captain Roberts, that he must proceed at his own risk and received the reply that he accepted full responsibility, then abandoned naval reserve sufficiently to signal 'Good Luck'—an indication that the policy imposed by the authorities at home had not been popular with the naval officers on the spot.

² The reports which had been received in London at the beginning of April regarding the mining of the approaches to Bilbao had added that mine-sweeping was being carried out on behalf of the Basque Government. A danger which was perhaps serious earlier in the month might therefore have ceased to exist by the time when British traffic with Bilbao was resumed.

on the policy which they were to follow, and at the end of April all four of them protested to General Franco in practically identical terms against the stopping and diversion of ships flying their flags. They also decided to raise the question at a meeting of the Non-Intervention Committee in London, and to suggest that the warships belonging to the four Great Naval Powers which were engaged in patrolling the coasts of Spain under the control system might extend their protection to Scandinavian merchant ships which had taken international observers on board. This suggestion was discussed at a meeting of the Chairman's Sub-Committee on the 30th April and of the full Committee on the 5th May; opinion was divided on the desirability of acceding to the request, and no decision had been reached before the whole question of the future of the patrol system came under consideration in consequence of the *Deutschland* incident at the end of May.¹

Interference with merchant ships on their lawful occasions was not the only cause of complaint which foreign Governments had against Spanish naval authorities during the first five months of 1937. There were also instances of apparently deliberate attacks on warships, as well as cases in which the attack was due to a misunderstanding or damage was caused unintentionally. It has been mentioned already that German and Italian warships in Spanish waters did not suffer in this way during the first quarter of 1937, and there was only one recorded incident in which a French warship was the victim—when, in the middle of January, a destroyer was bombed, but not damaged, by an unidentified aeroplane off the coast of Catalonia. British warships did not escape so lightly. On the 2nd February, 1937, Spanish Government aeroplanes dropped bombs near H.M.S. *Royal Oak* in the neighbourhood of Gibraltar—apparently under the impression that they were attacking the Nationalist cruiser *Canarias*. An apology for this incident was made and accepted on the 8th February. In the middle of February two British destroyers were bombed by an aeroplane (presumed to be in the Nationalists' service), but again no damage was done. On the 24th February the *Royal Oak* was in trouble once more; she was struck by an anti-aircraft shell during an air raid on Valencia, and this time three officers and two other ranks were injured, though none of them seriously. This damage was clearly accidental, and the incident was closed by an expression of

¹ On the 5th May the Non-Intervention Committee decided that the Governments represented on the Committee should be asked to supply information regarding interference with ships flying their flags, and to state their views on the legal situation and on the action which might be taken collectively or by individual Governments.

concern on the part of the Spanish Government. Early in April the destroyer *Gallant* was bombed by Nationalist aircraft (apparently in mistake for a Spanish Government destroyer), but was not hit. On the 13th May eight men were killed and fourteen injured on board H.M. destroyer *Hunter* when an explosion occurred below her water-line while she was on patrol duty off the south coast of Spain. The damage was proved to have been caused by a floating mine, and a protest was made to General Franco on the ground that mining on the high seas was not recognized as legitimate. The Nationalists' reply—to the effect that the mine had been moored in territorial waters—was not accepted, and a demand was made for the payment of approximately £134,500 to meet the cost of repairs and to compensate men who had been injured and the relatives of those killed.¹

It will be seen that the incident in which the *Deutschland* was involved on the 29th May was unprecedented only in the amount of damage caused and in the number of casualties (and it could be argued that the responsibility of the commanders whose aeroplanes had dropped bombs on or near French and British warships earlier in the year was not any the less because the bombs on those occasions had failed to achieve their purpose). What was unprecedented was the nature of the German reaction; and in this connexion it was specially significant that an Italian warship had been the victim of a similar attack a few days earlier with a resulting loss of life, and that the Italian authorities had refrained from taking reprisals.

On the 24th and 26th May aeroplanes belonging to the Spanish Government carried out raids over Palma (Majorca) to the danger of British, German and Italian vessels which were lying in the harbour (a practice had been developed by which ships engaged in patrol duty, though they did not use Spanish ports as their bases, paid frequent visits of short duration to places on the Spanish seaboard). On the earlier of these two occasions a bomb exploded in the officers' quarters on the Italian naval auxiliary vessel *Barletta*, killing six officers and wounding others; splinters from bombs fell on the decks of two other Italian warships, and a British destroyer was also in danger from the bombs. During the raid on the 26th May four bombs fell near the German destroyer *Albatross*, but no damage was done. The Italian Government followed the strictly correct course of reporting the *Barletta* incident to the Non-Intervention Committee, which discussed the matter at its meeting on the 28th May.

¹ Statement by Mr. Eden in the House of Commons on the 24th November, 1937. ,

Count Grandi drew attention to the fact that the Italian vessels in question had been engaged in the non-intervention patrol, he invited the Committee to 'reassert its authority and its prestige', which had been 'seriously shaken by these acts', and at the same time he declared that his Government reserved to themselves 'the right to protect howsoever and wheresoever the Italian flag, as well as the life and interests of their nationals'. The Committee, having heard Count Grandi's statement and statements from the representatives of Germany and Great Britain on the subject of the danger to which warships flying the flags of those countries had also been exposed, adopted a resolution declaring that they deeply deplored the incident; noting that the British authorities had received an assurance that a safety zone would be defined at Palma, and suggesting that this zone should be made available to all warships on patrol duty; and reserving the right to express further views on the receipt of a full report.

The events of the next day (the 29th May) were described by the German Government¹ as follows:

On Saturday, the 29th May, the armoured vessel *Deutschland* was peacefully at anchor in the roadstead of Iviza. Between 6 and 7 p.m. bombs were suddenly dropped by two aeroplanes of the Red Valencia authorities, swooping down on the battleship.

As the ship was at rest, the crew at the time of the attack were in the unprotected quarters forward. One of the bombs fell in the middle of the seamen's mess. Twenty-two dead and eighty-three wounded² were the result of this assault. The second bomb hit the side deck, but caused little damage.

The attack on the ship came entirely as a surprise. The ship had not fired at the aeroplanes.³

¹ In their note of the 31st May, 1937, to the Non-Intervention Committee.

² Nine of the injured men subsequently died, the bodies of thirty-one seamen were given a State funeral, attended by Herr Hitler as well as by the Commanders-in-Chief of the Army and Navy, at Wilhelmshaven on the 17th June.

³ Further details were given in an official *communiqué* published in Berlin on the 8th June after a full report had been received from the Commander-in-Chief of the German naval forces. According to this account the attack took place at about 10 o'clock.

'The machines flew overland with the sun behind them and dropped several bombs on the armoured vessel as she lay at rest, of which two hit her. In view of the low altitude at which they were flying there can have been no question of the airmen's mistaking the *Deutschland* for a White Spanish ship. The *Deutschland*, which lay at anchor ready to repel attack, could not recognize the markings and type of the aircraft against the sun, and in all the circumstances had no reason to fire on unidentified aircraft. Thus it came about that these were established as aggressors only after they had dropped bombs. It is a fact that no shot was fired either by the armoured

According to the account which the Spanish Government gave of the incident,¹ there had been an exchange of communications on the morning of the 29th May between the German naval commander and the authorities at Valencia, in which the former had given warning that Republican aircraft which flew over German warships engaged upon patrol duty would be fired upon, while the latter had replied that German warships would be in no danger from Republican aircraft if they carried out their patrolling duties at the stipulated distance of ten miles from the shore,² but that their safety could not be guaranteed if they entered 'roadsteads or ports which' were 'well-known centres of insurgent activity'. The Spanish version of the events which took place later in the day was as follows.

During the afternoon of the same day, two aeroplanes sent by the Republican military authorities on reconnaissance above the rebel centre of Iviza were fired on by a German warship anchored in the port. The orders given by the German Admiral during the morning had, therefore, been executed. The Spanish aeroplanes retaliated by bombing the aggressor vessel. The Spanish Government immediately announced these facts in a *communiqué* to the Press.

The German Government took no action for thirty-six hours after these events had occurred at Iviza, but at 5.45 on the morning of the 31st May a German cruiser and four destroyers fired 200 shots at the town of Almería. According to the Spanish Government, thirty-five buildings were entirely destroyed by this bombardment, with a loss of at least nineteen lives. Later on the same day the German Government communicated to the Non-Intervention Committee their version of the *Deutschland* incident, and informed them of the action which they had taken in retaliation at Almería. They added that 'after the harbour works had been destroyed and the hostile batteries silenced, the act of retaliation was terminated'.

At the same time the Non-Intervention Committee were notified of the German Government's decision to 'cease to take part in the control scheme, as well as in the discussions of the Non-Intervention

vessel *Deutschland* or by the destroyer *Leopard* [which was also lying in the harbour].

'During the air attack units of the Red Spanish Fleet, the cruisers *Libertad* and *Mendez-Nunez*, were sighted about seventeen miles and four destroyers nine miles away. A few minutes after the bomb attack a coastal bombardment by the Red destroyers occurred.'

'All assertions by the Valencia rulers about fire from the German warships are untrue.'

¹ In a note of the 31st May to the Secretary-General of the League of Nations protesting against the bombardment of Almería. The Spanish Government also sent a note of protest to the Non-Intervention Committee on the 4th June.

² See p. 293, above.

Committee, as long as they had 'not received sure guarantees against the recurrence of such events'. The Non-Intervention Committee received notice on the same day that Italy had decided to follow the example of Germany and withdraw her ships from the patrol system and her representatives from the Committee 'until such time as the Committee itself' had 'adopted measures which' would 'serve to prevent new criminal attacks'.

The profoundly painful impression which was produced upon world public opinion by the attack on the *Deutschland* and still more by the German reprisals was deepened by the fear that Germany and Italy meant to resume complete freedom of action and that the danger to the peace of Europe which the policy of non-intervention had been designed to avert (and which it had sensibly lessened, in spite of the extent to which the practice of non-intervention had fallen short of the principle) would reappear in an acute form.¹ During the critical days which followed the German and Italian announcements of withdrawal from the patrol system and from the London Committee, the main concern of the British and French Governments was to avoid the breakdown of the policy with which they had associated themselves. They had a basis to work on in the fact that Germany and Italy had not announced their withdrawal as definitive, but had indicated the possibility that they would resume co-operation with the other Powers if they were given guarantees against a recurrence of incidents such as those of the 24th and 29th May. It had also been authoritatively stated in German diplomatic circles in London that the German Government did not intend to dissociate themselves from the non-intervention system altogether, and that German merchant ships would continue to take observers on board.

The situation was discussed at a meeting of the Chairman's Sub-Committee on the 31st May, which was not attended by a representative of Germany or of Italy. As was to be expected, the Russian representative was most emphatic in his condemnation of German methods, but other members of the sub-committee also referred to the fact that the similar if less serious incidents of which other countries had been the victims had not evoked any retaliation, and had often

¹ In quarters which were sympathetic to the Spanish Government there was also felt to be a good deal of ground for the fear which that Government expressed lest other coast towns should share the fate of Almeria. The German and Italian Governments had said nothing about withdrawing their warships from the Mediterranean on ceasing to take part in the naval patrol; instead, it had been announced in Berlin that the German fleet in Spanish waters was being reinforced.

not even been referred to the Non-Intervention Committee. The French representative, in particular, mentioned two recent occasions on which his Government had refrained from taking any action other than a protest: the shooting down of a French air liner over Basque territory on the 26th May, and the bombing of Cerbère, at the eastern extremity of the Franco-Spanish frontier, by aircraft believed to be of German origin, on the 22nd May. The majority of the members of the committee were less ready than their Russian colleague¹ to accept without question the Spanish Government's account of the responsibility for the *Deutschland* incident (though some of them were no doubt inclined to think that the incident might have arisen out of a genuine misunderstanding of some kind). It was agreed that efforts should be made to induce Germany and Italy to resume full co-operation in the non-intervention system, and it was also agreed that the negotiations would be most likely to succeed if they were conducted in the first place by diplomatic conversations between the four Powers which had undertaken to patrol the coasts of Spain.

During the next few days, accordingly, negotiations were opened through diplomatic channels between the French and British Governments on the one hand and the Governments of Germany and Italy on the other with the object of ascertaining what guarantees against further interference with warships engaged in patrol duty would satisfy the 'Fascist' Governments. By the 4th June the British Government had submitted to the other three Governments the outline of a plan which, they hoped, might meet the case; but the German and Italian observations on these proposals, which were received on the 5th June, made it clear that a settlement was not yet in sight. The principal obstacle to agreement was the question of the right of each of the Governments concerned to act individually and immediately in case of attack. The French and British Governments were in complete agreement that any arrangement which was come to must exclude the possibility of a repetition of the bombardment of Almería,² while Germany and Italy shared the view that the system of consultation between the four Powers in the event of an attack upon a warship belonging to any one of them, which had been suggested by the British Government, was not an adequate substitute

¹ The Russian Government later sent a note to the Non-Intervention Committee, setting out the argument that the *Deutschland* could not be said to have been engaged in international patrol work at the time of the incident because she was not within the limits fixed for the operation of the patrol.

² Mr. Eden told the House of Commons on the 9th June that the British Government had always accepted 'the right of self-defence' but that they 'would never subscribe to the right of retaliation'.

for the right to take individual action, since it would involve at best a period of delay before collective action was decided on and might mean that no action at all would be taken. The discussion then turned on the question of what kind of individual action could be allowed. Agreement was finally reached on the principles that action in self-defence might be considered permissible, but not action in retaliation, and that undue delay in reaching agreement on collective action would create a new situation in which each of the Powers might reserve the right to determine its own attitude. On the 9th June, Herr von Ribbentrop, who had been in Germany since the crisis began, returned to London, four-Power conversations took place at the Foreign Office on the 11th and 12th June; and on the evening of the 12th June agreement was reached on the text of two documents. In the first of these, which was transmitted immediately to the Spanish Government and to General Franco, the two parties in Spain were asked to give 'a specific assurance' that their naval and air forces would respect foreign warships 'on the high seas and elsewhere', and to agree with the four Powers 'on a list of Spanish ports to be made available for use as bases for their patrol ships and on a definition of the safety zones which should be established in those ports'. They were informed at the same time

that any infraction of the aforesaid assurances or any attack upon foreign warships responsible for the naval patrol will be regarded by the four Powers participating in the control as a matter of common concern; and that the four Powers, irrespective of any immediate measures of self-defence considered necessary by the forces of the Power actually attacked, will immediately seek agreement among themselves concerning steps to be taken in concert, taking into consideration the views which the Government concerned is naturally entitled to express as to further appropriate measures.

In the second document, the four Powers undertook, in the event of a new incident, to 'endeavour in every way to come to a satisfactory agreement when conferring', but reserved their attitudes in the event of a 'new situation' having arisen because agreement had not been reached 'within a given period of time, which should be in accordance with the circumstances of the individual case'.

On the 16th June the Governments of Germany and Italy announced that they had decided to return to the Non-Intervention Committee and to resume their duties in regard to naval control immediately, without waiting for the two parties in Spain to give the assurances for which they had been asked. German and Italian representatives attended a meeting of the Non-Intervention Committee on the 18th June, but the only business that was done on this

occasion was the approval of an appeal to the Spanish Government and to General Franco to show a greater regard for humanitarian principles in their conduct of hostilities.¹ An attempt to re-open the question of recalling volunteers from Spain was made at a meeting of the Chairman's Sub-Committee on the 21st June, but by that time another naval incident had created another crisis, which ended in the definitive withdrawal of Germany and Italy from the naval patrol scheme (though not in their withdrawal from the Non-Intervention Committee).

The incident of the alleged attack by a submarine upon the German cruiser *Leipzig*, which caused this new crisis, took place on the 18th June. According to the official German version, which was made public in a *communiqué* on the 19th June, the commander of the *Leipzig* had reported that three torpedoes had been fired at the cruiser on the morning of the 15th June, when she was off Oran, but as she had not been hit the German Government had made no statement on the subject pending the result of investigations. On the afternoon of the 18th June, however, a fourth submarine attack on the *Leipzig* was 'established beyond doubt' by observation both of the sound of the shot and of the passing of the torpedo across the bows of the cruiser.² The *communiqué* added that the German Government were not prepared 'to look on at the target practice of the Spanish Bolshevik submarine pirates until eventually they may score a hit', and that it would be 'the task of the four Powers to undertake measures applicable in the circumstances and in accordance with the agreement'.

As soon as news of this incident reached Germany, Herr Hitler conferred with the Commanders-in-Chief of the Army and Navy and with the Foreign Minister, and after this consultation instructions were sent to Herr von Ribbentrop in London to ask for an immediate meeting of the four naval patrolling Powers, in accordance with the terms of the agreement of the 12th June. On receiving this request from the German Ambassador Mr. Eden at once got into touch with the Ambassadors of the other two Powers; and, after a preliminary exchange of views, a further meeting was arranged for the 21st June, in order to allow time for the Ambassadors to consult their Govern-

¹ See p. 381, below.

² A later report stated that 'these observations were confirmed on the 20th June by a diver, who found a dent on the ship's side below the water-line with an average diameter of about 6 in.' This discovery was held to prove either that the cruiser had come into collision with part of the superstructure of a submarine, or that a torpedo which had failed to explode had glanced off the ship's side.

ments. In the interval before the next four-Power meeting was held, the German Government emphasized their view of the seriousness of the situation by informing the British Ambassador in Berlin that the German Foreign Minister would be obliged to postpone a visit to London which had been arranged for the 23rd–25th June.¹ An invitation to come to London had been accepted by Herr von Neurath immediately after the settlement of the *Deutschland* incident, and as the Spanish question had been one of the principal subjects on which British Ministers had hoped to have an exchange of views with the German Foreign Minister, the indefinite postponement of his visit was perhaps not unreasonably regarded in London as an unfavourable omen, not only for a satisfactory settlement of the *Leipzig* incident, but also for a speedy solution of the wider issues at stake.

The Italian Government shared the German Government's view that the manner in which the *Leipzig* incident was dealt with must be regarded as a test of the efficacy of the arrangements which had been agreed upon on the 12th June, and that if Germany's demands were not satisfied without delay the arrangements for consultation would be proved worthless. The French and British Governments, on the other hand, considered that, before any joint action could be decided on, there ought to be an inquiry into the validity of the information which the German Government had received about the alleged submarine attack. The Spanish Government denied categorically that any submarine belonging to them had attacked the *Leipzig* either on the 15th June or on the 18th—declaring that all their submarines were in port on both those dates—and the feeling in Paris and London that further investigation was desirable was strengthened by recollections of occasions during the General War of 1914–18 on which reports of submarine attacks, made in perfect good faith by the ship which believed itself to have been attacked, had subsequently been proved to have no foundation in fact. The German Government's proposals for immediate joint action included a visit to Spanish territorial waters by ships showing the flags of the four patrolling Powers, and the despatch of another warning, couched in sterner terms than the last, to the Spanish Government. Their original suggestions also included one for the internment in a neutral port of all Spanish submarines,² but this point was dropped during the negotia-

¹ See also vol. i, pp. 327–8.

² This suggestion appeared to confirm the supposition that none of the submarines belonging to the Spanish fleet at the outbreak of war had passed into General Franco's possession. For a report that he had acquired two partially constructed vessels see p. 43 n., above.

tions. Herr von Ribbentrop also departed from his Government's original standpoint sufficiently to agree that an inquiry into the circumstances of the alleged attack might begin simultaneously with the proposed joint naval demonstration, but he refused to accept the contention of the French and British Governments that the inquiry must precede the joint action. After the second of two meetings on the 21st June it was announced that agreement had not been reached and that the Ambassadors were asking for further instructions; but these instructions did not open up a way out of the deadlock. On the 22nd June the negotiations finally broke down, and the termination of the conversations was announced in an official *communiqué*, which explained that 'it was unfortunately found impossible to reach agreement on the measures which should be adopted in this case'.

With the breakdown of the four-Power negotiations on the 22nd June, the 'new situation' contemplated in the second document which had been adopted on the 12th June came into force, and Germany regained her freedom of action. While the discussions had been going on in London, Herr Hitler had remained in close touch with his principal advisers, and the outcome of these deliberations in Berlin was awaited with considerable trepidation in Paris and London. It was with feelings in which relief predominated that the French and British Governments learnt that the German Government did not intend to take reprisals for the alleged attack on the *Leipzig*, and that they had decided to confine their action to withdrawing—this time definitively—from the naval patrol scheme. This notification was made to the British Ambassador in Berlin and to the Foreign Office in London on the 23rd June,¹ and the British Government were informed at the same time that the German Government would still consider themselves bound by the Non-Intervention Agreement and would continue to be represented on the London Committee. The decision of the Italian Government to withdraw from the patrol scheme but not from the Non-Intervention Committee was announced on the same day.

¹ A long explanatory statement was issued in Berlin on the same day, setting out the German Government's version of the incident and of the ensuing negotiations, and expressing the view that, in the light of the rejection by France and Great Britain even of Germany's 'weakened proposals', there was nothing to be gained by keeping the arrangement for joint consultation in force. Experience had now shown the German Government that 'in the event of future Red attacks an investigation lasting for months would have to be made'; and participation in naval control had therefore become 'intolerable to any Power sensible of its honour and conscious of its responsibility'.

(i) THE QUESTION OF WITHDRAWING VOLUNTEERS AND GRANTING BELLIGERENT RIGHTS (JUNE–AUGUST 1937)

The two months which followed the withdrawal of Germany and Italy from the naval patrol system on the 23rd June were occupied by almost completely fruitless negotiations, the outstanding feature of which was the linking together of the question of withdrawing volunteers from Spain and the question of granting belligerent rights to both participants in the Spanish civil war. To secure an agreement for the withdrawal of volunteers remained the chief aim of France and Great Britain, whereas Germany and Italy were the principal advocates of the policy of granting belligerent rights—a policy which was strongly opposed by Russia and which also met with little favour in France. The compromise by which the two questions were made interdependent was suggested by Great Britain in the middle of July, but, although the British proposal formed the basis of the subsequent negotiations, little or no advance towards a solution had been made when, at the end of August, attention had to be concentrated on the urgent problem of dealing with the submarine menace to non-Spanish shipping in the Mediterranean.¹

The British Government had decided, just before they came to be preoccupied with the crisis arising out of the *Leipzig* incident, that it was incumbent upon them to take a firmer stand than they had taken hitherto at meetings of the Non-Intervention Committee. Now that the system of control had been in force for some two months it was possible to estimate how far it was proving successful in preventing, or at least restraining, the continuance of intervention in Spain. From the evidence at their disposal, the British Government formed the opinion that the system, so far as it went, was working fairly satisfactorily: that is to say, control was preventing any substantial number of volunteers or quantity of munitions from crossing the land frontiers into Spain, and there were no reports of cargoes of war material being carried on ships which took observers on board. There were, however, cases of ships which were under an obligation to comply with the procedure of observation failing to do so and succeeding in slipping through the patrol, and there was also the trouble that the observation system did not apply to all ships trading with Spanish ports. The gap in the system of which the greatest advantage was being taken was that created by the immunity from control of ships flying the Spanish flag; but there was in addition a certain

¹ See section (j) below.

amount of traffic in non-European ships.¹ There was no doubt, also, that advantage was being taken of the absence of supervision over air routes in order to send aircraft to Spain for military purposes.

At a meeting of the Chairman's Sub-Committee on the 21st June Lord Plymouth announced that His Majesty's Government were highly dissatisfied with the existing situation, in which foreign supplies of arms and munitions were still reaching both sides in Spain, and that they felt that if this state of affairs were to continue they might be obliged to reconsider their attitude in regard to the policy of non-intervention.² He appealed to the Governments represented on the sub-committee to intensify their efforts to ensure the observance in their own territories of the obligations which they had undertaken, and to make it clear that they were prepared to co-operate in isolating the conflict in Spain. He referred in particular to the question of withdrawing volunteers from Spain—pointing out that the technical sub-committee's report on that question³ had now been in the hands of Governments for a month, but that very few observations on it had been received.⁴ His Majesty's Government realized that there must inevitably be considerable delay before an agreement for the withdrawal of all foreign nationals from Spain could be put into force, but they felt it to be of the utmost importance that a beginning should be made without delay in advance of the adoption of a complete plan. They therefore 'offered to place their services at the disposal of the Committee in order to facilitate and to hasten the first withdrawals of foreign combatants'.⁵

The Chairman's Sub-Committee agreed that the Governments represented on the Committee should be asked to communicate without delay their views on this proposal for a preliminary withdrawal of some volunteers, and they also agreed that certain other steps should be taken with a view to tightening up the system of control. The

¹ According to the report which was prepared by the Chairman and Secretary of the Non-Intervention Board in August (see p. 338, below), 19 per cent. of the ships which called at Spanish ports between the 19th April and the end of July flew the Spanish flag, and 1 per cent. the flag of a non-European country. Only four ships which should have complied with the procedure for taking an observer on board and had failed to do so had been identified, but information supplied by shipping agencies and insurance companies showed that forty-two ships having the right to fly the flag of a state member of the Non-Intervention Committee had omitted to take observers on board and had passed through the patrol zone without being identified.

² A statement to the same effect was made by Mr. Eden in the House of Commons on the 22nd June. ³ See p. 301, above.

⁴ Only four Governments had communicated their observations by the end of June.

⁵ Mr. Eden in the House of Commons on the 22nd June.

British Government were invited to explore the possibility of securing the co-operation of non-European states in applying the policy of non-intervention, and a French proposal for dealing with evasions of the control system by the use of the Spanish flag was submitted to the Governments for consideration.

This meeting of the Chairman's Sub-Committee coincided with the four-Power negotiations for a settlement of the *Leipzig* incident, and on the break-down of those negotiations on the 22nd June the question of withdrawing volunteers from Spain and the examination of methods of filling the gaps in the control system had to be subordinated to a consideration of the more urgent problems arising out of the definitive withdrawal of Germany and Italy from participation in the naval patrol. In Rome on the 23rd June questions from a Press correspondent elicited the statements that Italy was keeping her ships on the spot because of the 'state of insecurity' in the Mediterranean, and that Italy and Germany reserved to themselves 'the right to judge the situation' in regard to the legality of stopping ships carrying supplies to 'Red' ports. These statements appeared to open up a prospect of something in the nature of a German and Italian blockade of ports under the Spanish Government's control, but apprehensions on this score were relieved at the end of June when it became known that the strength of the German fleet in the Mediterranean was being considerably reduced.¹

Meanwhile, the French and British Governments had lost no time in consulting together on the situation and in producing proposals for reconstituting the naval observation scheme now that the system of naval zones which had come into force in April had broken down. On the 25th June the two Governments decided that they should offer to take over the duty of patrolling the German and Italian zones as well as the zones originally allocated to them. During the next few days, experts were engaged in working out the details of this proposal, which was formally submitted to the Chairman's Sub-Committee on the 29th June. The suggestion was that

the United Kingdom Government should be responsible for the naval observation of those parts of the coast of Spain now in the hands of the Spanish Government and that the French and the United Kingdom Government should share responsibility for the observation of those parts of the coast of Spain now in the hands of General Franco on a basis to be arranged between the two Governments.

It was pointed out, however, that 'by far the greater part of the last-

¹ Two German cruisers, four destroyers and a submarine were reported to have been sighted on the 28th June on their way home.

named coasts would inevitably require to be included in the French zone'.¹ In outlining these proposals to the sub-committee, Lord Plymouth also announced that the British and French Governments had 'agreed in principle to the appointment of neutral observers to be stationed on the patrol ships'.

Before this offer was made formally to the Chairman's Sub-Committee, it had become clear from the comments of the German and Italian Press that the 'Fascist' Powers did not look with favour upon the idea of a simple transfer of their zones to Great Britain and France. The suggestion for posting observers on the ships engaged in patrol² was included in the Anglo-French proposals in the hope of averting 'Fascist' suspicions that the new arrangement might operate less impartially than the old, but it did not achieve this object. The Anglo-French plan was welcomed by the Russian member of the Chairman's Sub-Committee on behalf of his Government, and also by the representatives of Belgium, Czechoslovakia and Sweden; but the German and Italian representatives 'pointed out their strong objections in principle against any proposal which was not based on the necessary equilibrium so as to ensure absolute impartiality of control'. They notified the sub-committee at the same time that their Governments 'had decided to advise their nationals at present employed as observing officers under the observation scheme to resign their appointments'.³

The Portuguese representative on the Chairman's Sub-Committee did not express an opinion either for or against the British proposals,⁴ but the absence of the usual support given by Portugal to the policy of Germany and Italy was more than counterbalanced by a new complication which the Portuguese Government had introduced into the situation. They had informed the British Government that

in view of the gap in the work of naval observation caused by the withdrawal of Germany and Italy from the naval patrol, they must reserve the right to withdraw from the scheme of observation at sea in the event of the continuance of the present circumstances, and that they had decided to suspend for the time being the facilities granted to

¹ Quoted from the official *communiqué* issued at the close of the meeting.

² This suggestion had been put forward by the French Government in June, in commenting on the British proposals for securing the return of Germany and Italy to the patrol system after the *Deutschland* incident.

³ Official *communiqué* on the meeting of the Chairman's Sub-Committee.

⁴ At the meeting of the Chairman's Sub-Committee on the 2nd July, the Portuguese representative said that his Government had no objections in principle to the Anglo-French proposal and would accept it if it was approved by all the other Powers, but that they thought that the loss of the equilibrium which marked the original scheme created a serious difficulty.

His Majesty's Embassy at Lisbon for the purpose of carrying out the scheme of observation on the Portuguese-Spanish frontier.¹

At the same time the Portuguese Government had declared that they would 'consider the prompt resumption of their duties by the British observers' if 'general assent' were 'obtained in principle for a plan for the re-establishment of maritime control'.²

In view of the division of opinion on the Chairman's Sub-Committee in regard to the Anglo-French proposals, the only decision which the sub-committee was able to take was that the members should refer the plan to their Governments for consideration; and it was suggested to the German and Italian representatives that, since the Anglo-French plan was not acceptable to their Governments, they should produce counter-proposals for submission to the sub-committee at its next meeting on the 2nd July. It was not difficult to forecast that the idea of granting belligerent rights to the two parties in Spain would figure prominently in any proposals which might emanate from Berlin and Rome in response to this suggestion.

It was generally assumed that the recognition of the belligerent status of the two parties to the Spanish civil war would give an advantage to General Franco, whose naval strength was superior to that of the Spanish Government.³ This naval superiority would enable the Nationalists to exercise to a greater extent than their opponents the right to visit and search foreign ships on the high seas which the recognition of belligerency would confer upon both sides, and this consideration had become particularly important now that earlier hopes of a speedy decision of the war on land had been disappointed. It might turn the scale fairly rapidly if General Franco's fleet (with or without assistance from German or Italian ships) could extend the campaign which they were already waging against foreign ships suspected of trading with Republican Spain to the degree that would be possible if their right to take such action could no longer be disputed. For some time past the Nationalists had been making representations to the effect that it was not in accordance with international law and practice to refuse to recognize their belligerent status, and another communication in this sense had been despatched to the British and other Governments in the middle of June.⁴ The Nationalists' claims

¹ Statement by Mr. Eden in the House of Commons on the 30th June, 1937.

² Mr. Eden, *loc. cit.*

³ See p. 34.

⁴ On the 6th July, while the German and Italian proposal for granting belligerent rights was under consideration, General Franco sent another note to the foreign Powers in which he added threat to persuasion. 'None of the countries [the note declared] which morally assist us seek territorial advantages on our shores, or the alteration of the *status quo* in the Mediterranean,

had met with no response hitherto from the Governments of France and Great Britain, who still held to the decision not to grant belligerent rights to either side which they had taken at the outbreak of the war and from which they had not been moved by the periodical announcements of General Franco's intention of imposing a blockade on portions of the coast under the Spanish Government's control,¹ but it was only to be expected that the Governments of Germany and Italy should support the Nationalists' demands for belligerent rights as soon as they found a suitable opportunity, such as was offered by the invitation to present proposals for arrangements to take the place of the naval observation scheme.

The plan which the German and Italian Governments drew up in consultation between the 29th June and the 2nd July was placed before the Chairman's Sub-Committee on the latter date by the German Ambassador, who made a statement on behalf of both Governments. The Anglo-French proposal, said Herr von Ribbentrop, could not be considered a satisfactory solution of the problem, mainly for the reason 'that the equality of treatment to the two parties in Spain which was granted under the four Powers' scheme' had 'been disturbed in favour of one party in Spain'. The two Governments were 'conscious of the real difficulties of the situation', and considered it 'the duty of all to seek new ways and methods to make non-intervention as effective as possible'. They therefore made the 'following new constructive suggestions':

1. All interested Powers agree to grant to the two parties in Spain belligerent rights.

Such a decision would have the immediate effect of strengthening the policy of non-intervention, as in fact all the European Powers would add to their obligations as signatories of the Non-Intervention Agreement the duties incumbent on neutral states according to the principles of international law adapted to the particular situation in Spain.

The proposed measure would ensure, moreover, the following advantages:

Firstly, by conferring an international status on the two parties in Spain, the latter would assume towards the neutral states full responsibility for the conduct of warfare in the air, on land, and on the sea.

Secondly, the patrol system by the four Powers, which has utterly failed, as well as any other form of naval patrol, would be unnecessary.

Thirdly, the serious loopholes existing in the former system would be eliminated, inasmuch as the ships flying either the Spanish flag or the

as they have repeatedly and solemnly declared. If other nations, forgetting their future interests, do not give satisfaction to the demands of Nationalist Spain . . . such nations should not be surprised if our international and economic policy closed our doors to those who showed their enmity to us in our hour of need.'

¹ See pp. 224, 257-8, 306-9, above.

flag of non-European countries would be submitted by the two parties to an effective form of control.

2. With the exception of the patrol system, which, as already pointed out, has proved an entire failure and cannot therefore be continued, the present supervision system already approved by the Committee should still be maintained. The German and the Italian Governments accordingly suggest that the observation of the land frontiers of Spain, as well as the system of supervision both in the ports and with the observers embarked on board the ships flying the flag of the non-intervention countries, should be maintained.

Count Grandi, who also spoke in support of the German-Italian proposals, though not at great length, made the point that the two Governments proposed to recognize the belligerent status of the Republican Government in Spain as well as that of the Nationalists, and that this represented a substantial concession on their part; and he also elaborated Herr von Ribbentrop's statement that the patrol system had 'utterly failed'—referring in particular to the traffic which was carried on under the Spanish flag and under the flags of non-European countries, but alleging also that there was a regular traffic between French territorial waters and 'Red' Spanish ports.¹

At the beginning of the meeting Lord Plymouth had explained that the Anglo-French offer to take over the responsibility for patrolling the entire Spanish coast was still open, and from the general discussion which followed the German and Italian statements it was clear that the majority of the members of the sub-committee greatly preferred the Anglo-French to the German-Italian proposals. There was, indeed, no support for the plan outlined by Herr von Ribbentrop, and strong opposition to it from the Russian and French

¹ The declared belief of Germany and Italy that France as well as Russia was still finding means of sending help to the Spanish Government may have been perfectly genuine, but since the coming into force of the plan of control over the French frontier it had become more difficult for them to make convincing accusations that men and munitions were crossing the land frontier from France into Spain in any considerable quantities. As proof of French partiality, however, they pointed to an incident which had occurred in the middle of May. Seventeen aeroplanes belonging to the Spanish Government had landed in French territory (alleging that they had lost their way in a fog) and had been allowed to refuel at French aerodromes and return to Spain. On behalf of the French Government it was explained that they had consulted Colonel Lunn, the Chief Administrator of the observers on the French frontier, before releasing the aeroplanes; that most of them had been deprived of the arms which they carried; and that the Spanish authorities had been warned that if the incident were repeated the aeroplanes would be detained. German and Italian suspicious of French partiality were also strengthened by the visit to Paris on the 2nd July of Señor Negrín and Señor Giral, respectively Prime Minister and Foreign Minister in the Valencia Government.

representatives. It was finally decided that the German-Italian and the Anglo-French plans should be sent to all the Governments represented on the Non-Intervention Committee with a request for their views on the relative merits of the two sets of proposals.

In the interval before the Non-Intervention Committee met on the 9th July, the alternative proposals were canvassed in the Press of the principal countries concerned, and the attitude of the various Governments concerned became clearer.

While there was no sign of any modification of the 'Fascist' Governments' attitude towards the Anglo-French proposals, there was also no sign that the Governments of Russia and France found the German-Italian counter-proposals any more acceptable on closer examination. The idea of granting belligerent rights to the two parties in Spain was disliked by Russia and France for the same reason that it appealed to Germany and Italy—that it was considered likely to give General Franco a substantial advantage over the Spanish Government. At the meeting of the sub-committee on the 2nd July the Russian representative had expressed the view that the adoption of the German-Italian proposals would completely upset the balance in the Nationalists' favour, and the Soviet Government remained throughout the subsequent negotiations the strongest opponents of the recognition of belligerency. The French Government, too, were most reluctant to consider the recognition of belligerency,¹ on the double ground that it would favour General Franco and that it would seriously interfere with legitimate trade; and their attitude was also stiffened by the fact that the German and Italian Governments proposed to abandon the naval patrol system but maintain the control over the land frontiers of Spain—a proposal which struck French minds as peculiarly invidious at a moment when the unilateral suspension of supervision over the Portuguese frontier had already left France in the position of the only Power whose frontier was subjected to control. Moreover, the conviction that German and Italian activities in Spain constituted a serious menace to France appeared to be gaining ground at this time. There were reports that the General Staff were feeling increasing concern on this score; and hints were thrown out that the 'Fascist' Powers would do well to bear in mind the ease with which volunteers and munitions could be sent to the Spanish Government across the French frontier.

¹ This was a matter on which the Popular Front held strong views. In the middle of July a Socialist Congress passed a resolution opposing the grant of belligerent rights and calling upon the Socialist members of the Cabinet to see that the Government did not give way.

if the breakdown of the non-intervention policy forced the French Government to revise their attitude

The British Government's views on the subject of granting belligerent rights to the contending parties in Spain were less rigid than those of France or Russia. They realized that from the point of view of British interests this course had a good deal to recommend it, for when once the belligerent status of the parties to the civil war had been recognized they would become legally responsible for any damage done to foreign shipping (except in cases where such ships were found to be carrying prohibited goods), and the experience of the last few months had shown that this might mean a considerable improvement on the existing state of affairs. In the opinion of His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom, they and other Governments were at liberty to give or withhold recognition of belligerency in accordance with the merits of the situation, and they were willing to concede that the struggle in Spain had for some months past 'been of a stature and nature which would have justified the recognition of the two parties as belligerents in normal circumstances'.¹ The circumstances could not, however, be regarded as normal, owing in the first place to the existence of the Non-Intervention Agreement and the machinery which had been established for applying that agreement, and in the second place to 'the presence of large numbers of foreigners fighting on both sides', which made it 'impossible to expect all the Governments concerned to regard the combatants in Spain as being sufficiently independent of foreign ties and commitments to be treated in accordance with normal international principles as parties to a civil war in which other Governments are neutral'.²

One reason why the idea, which was taking shape during the first half of July, of conceding the recognition of belligerent rights in consideration of the withdrawal of volunteers commended itself to the British Government, was that the opposition of the 'Fascist' Powers, and especially of Italy, to the proposal for the withdrawal of foreign nationals from Spain appeared to be growing stronger at that time, and the prospect of an agreement on the question seemed to be remote unless Germany and Italy could be made to feel that it was worth their while to change their tune.

There had been a brief discussion of the question of withdrawing volunteers at the meeting of the Chairman's Sub-Committee on the

¹ Statement by Lord Plymouth at the meeting of the Non-Intervention Committee on the 16th July, 1937.

² Lord Plymouth, *loc. cit.*

29th June, when Lord Plymouth had again expressed his Government's anxiety that progress should be made at the earliest possible moment, and the French representative had suggested that a start might be made by the immediate withdrawal of all non-Spanish nationals who were either wounded or prisoners of war Count Grandi had made a declaration on this occasion (*à propos* of recent allegations made by the Spanish Embassy in London regarding the arrival of more Italian volunteers)¹ to the effect that 'not a single Italian volunteer' had left Italy for Spain since the ban had been agreed upon by the Non-Intervention Committee. Taken at its face value this statement should have been reassuring, but its effect was diminished by the fact that the Press of both Germany and Italy was now conducting a campaign against any arrangement for the withdrawal of volunteers. According to the German Press, it would be impossible to carry out an arrangement of this kind in an impartial manner because the 'Bolshevist hordes' on the Spanish Government's side were not subject to discipline in the same way as the 'Fascist' volunteers and therefore could not be recalled by their Governments; whereas Signor Mussolini, in an article in the *Popolo d'Italia*, developed the contradictory argument that the volunteers on the Nationalists' side could not be recalled by their Governments because they could only be dismissed by the Generalissimo under whom they had taken service.²

At the meeting of the Non-Intervention Committee on the 9th July, Lord Plymouth opened the proceedings by announcing that the British Government could not accept the German-Italian counter-proposals of the 2nd July; that their own offer of the 29th June for the reconstitution of the naval patrol still held good; and that they would be prepared to consider any other proposals that might

¹ The allegations were that in the middle of May 15,000 Italian soldiers had landed at Cádiz and Málaga, and that 8,000 more had left Italy for Spain on the 24th June.

² The indications in regard to General Franco's willingness to part with the foreign troops who had been sent to his assistance were also somewhat contradictory at this time. General Franco himself told a correspondent of *The Times* early in July that a general withdrawal would be impossible because the Republican Government lacked the control which would enable them to carry out any pledges that they might give; but there were also indications that this might not be his last word on the subject. General Quicpo de Llano, for instance, was reported to have said that in his belief General Franco would not oppose a general withdrawal of volunteers in the interests of international peace; and there were also reports that the Italian troops were becoming increasingly unpopular in Nationalist Spain. General Franco might perhaps agree without much reluctance to part with his Italian infantry, but it would probably be a different matter if it came to the question of recalling German and Italian artillery and aircraft experts.

be made. The French Ambassador, Monsieur Corbin, also rejected the Italo-German plan as inequitable to the two parties in Spain and to the Powers, and he announced at the same time that his Government had decided that the existing position in regard to the control of the land frontiers of Spain could not be allowed to continue. France was prepared to accept the maintenance of control over her Spanish frontier as part of a general plan, but unless control were re-established on the Portuguese-Spanish frontier during the next few days the French Government would feel obliged to withdraw the facilities granted to the international observing officers on their frontier with Spain.¹ In defence of this course, Monsieur Corbin pointed out that, in the absence of the naval patrol, the only guarantee that the procedure for embarking observers on board ships bound for Spain was being complied with would be the good faith of the Governments and of the masters of merchant ships; and if good faith was an adequate guarantee in the case of maritime traffic, it was equally adequate in the case of traffic across land frontiers. At a later stage in the debate Lord Plymouth expressed the opinion that the French attitude on this question was reasonable in the circumstances.

The Russian Ambassador reaffirmed his support of the Anglo-French proposals of the 29th June, and seized the occasion for an attack on Germany and Italy, whom he accused of desiring not only to gain control of Spanish mineral resources but also to establish naval and air bases in Spain. These allegations were indignantly rebutted by the Italian and German representatives, who also made it clear that their Governments' attitude towards the Anglo-French plan had undergone no change.² The Portuguese delegate expressed the opinion that the naval patrol was of little value, but he did not commit himself to supporting the German-Italian proposal for granting belligerent rights. The majority of the representatives of the smaller states members of the Committee indicated their approval of the suggestion that France and Great Britain should take over the

¹ This decision was carried into effect on the 13th July; but it was emphasized in French official quarters that this move did not mean that the frontier was open; French customs officials and police would continue to exercise strict supervision over all traffic with Spain.

² Count Grandi mentioned, as an instance of the futility of the patrol system, the situation which had existed at Bilbao in May and June when British merchant ships had been conducted by British warships to the limits of Spanish territorial waters (see p. 309, above). He made use of somewhat vigorous terms, which led Lord Plymouth to announce that H.M. Government were not prepared to accept strictures from any quarter on the manner in which they carried out their obligations.

responsibility for patrolling the whole Spanish coast-line,¹ but several of them explained that they would also accept any other plan which won general favour. The deadlock between Germany and Italy on the one hand, and France, Great Britain and Russia on the other hand appeared to be complete, and it was finally decided, on the initiative of the Dutch representative, that the Government of the United Kingdom should be invited to make an attempt to reconcile the opposing points of view. After a short adjournment, Lord Plymouth was able to announce that his Government were prepared to undertake this task.

It has been mentioned that the general lines of a possible compromise had already been under consideration, and the British Government were therefore able to produce their suggestions for closing the gap in the control scheme with a minimum of delay. Their proposals² were circulated on the 14th July for the 'immediate consideration' of the other twenty-six Governments represented on the Non-Intervention Committee, with the plea that they should display a 'greater spirit of international co-operation' than had been achieved in the past in order to avert the 'new and infinitely more dangerous situation' which would arise if the non-intervention scheme were to break down.

The British plan provided for the continuance of the system of embarking observers on ships bound for Spain, for the replacement of the naval patrol system by 'the establishment, with the consent of both parties, of international officers in Spanish ports under proper safeguards', and for the immediate restoration of the system of supervision on land frontiers. It suggested that all the Governments parties to the Non-Intervention Agreement should 'recognize the two parties in Spain as possessing a status which justifies them in exercising belligerent rights at sea in accordance with the rules governing such exercise'. This recognition of belligerency, however, was to be subject to certain special conditions. The contraband lists recognized by the belligerents were to be identical with the Non-Intervention Committee's list of prohibited goods (though the possibility of adding to the Non-Intervention Committee's list was not to be excluded); ships carrying observers and flying the flag of the Non-Intervention Committee were to be allowed unmolested passage

¹ By the 4th July, the French Government were said to have received assurances of support for the Anglo-French scheme from twenty out of the twenty-seven Governments represented on the Non-Intervention Committee.

² The text was published as the White Paper *Cmd. 5221* of 1937. It will also be found in *Documents on International Affairs, 1937*, vol. ii.

provided that they were not engaged in 'unneutral service' or in 'breach of a blockade which' had 'been duly notified and' was 'effectively maintained'; and neutral shipping passing near the coast of Spain but not engaged in traffic with Spain was not to be impeded or interfered with. In the event of any disregard of these conditions Governments parties to the Non-Intervention Agreement were to be entitled to protect ships flying their flags against the exercise of belligerent rights.

The plan also provided for the closing of certain of the more obvious loopholes in the control system which had been in operation since April 1937.¹ It suggested that the Non-Intervention Agreement should be extended 'so as to prohibit the carriage to Spain, from any port, by ships entitled to fly the flag of any of the parties to the agreement, of goods on the prohibited list', that non-European states should be invited to become parties to the agreement and avail themselves of the facilities for embarking observers on their ships; and that further consideration should be given to the question of controlling the entry of foreign aircraft into Spain.

In regard to the withdrawal of foreign volunteers, the British plan proposed that the Non-Intervention Committee should 'pass a unanimous resolution in favour of the withdrawal from Spain of all persons whose evacuation is recommended in the report of the Technical Sub-Committee';² that a Commission should be sent to either party in

¹ It will be noted that the question of transfer of flag was not explicitly covered, but proposals for dealing with this matter had already been submitted by the French Government (see p. 322, above). The grant to both sides of the right to visit and search foreign ships on the high seas could hardly be expected to solve the problem of abuse of the Spanish flag, since the warships of either party had presumably already been doing their best to stop the traffic, in ships flying the Spanish flag, from which the other party benefited.

² See p. 301, above. The report of the Technical Sub-Committee had not been published, but an authorized summary of the relevant part of it was issued at the same time as the British memorandum. This was as follows:

Persons recommended to be evacuated

All persons in Spain, the Spanish Possessions, or the Spanish Zone in Morocco are liable to be evacuated who, on the 18th July, 1936, either were nationals of, or—being stateless persons—were domiciled in, any country the Government of which is a party to the Non-Intervention Agreement, and who are unable to prove that they entered the service of either party in Spain before that date, if they fall within any of the following categories:

- (i) Combatant personnel of whatever rank attached to, serving in, or serving with the naval, military, or air forces of either of the parties in Spain.
- (ii) Personnel engaged in the maintenance of essential services in connexion with the armed forces of either party, e.g. lines of communication, ground services in aerodromes, supply, ordnance, &c. (N.B.

Spain 'to make arrangements for and to supervise the withdrawal of the persons in question as soon as possible'; and that all Governments should 'undertake to collaborate in such practical measures as may be found necessary for effecting these withdrawals'.

It was proposed that the above programme should be carried out in the following stages:

- (1) Establishment of officers in Spanish ports, and withdrawal of naval patrol, as soon as possible;
- (ii) Establishment of commissions to make arrangements for and supervise the withdrawal of foreign nationals, and extension of the Non-Intervention Agreement . . . to follow (i) as quickly as possible;
- (iii) Recognition of belligerent rights to become effective when the Non-Intervention Committee place on record their opinion that the arrangements for the withdrawal of foreign nationals are working satisfactorily and that this withdrawal has in fact made substantial progress.

Finally, His Majesty's Government suggested that they should be authorized by the Committee to enter immediately into discussions with the two parties in Spain on the following points:

- (1) The establishment of officers in Spanish ports.
- (2) Withdrawal of foreign volunteers including the establishment of the Commissions in Spain.
- (3) The conditions on which belligerent rights are to be granted.

It will be seen that the British Government were justified in describing their proposals, in the preamble to the plan, as 'a compromise between varying points of view'. The plan was designed to satisfy Germany and Italy by accepting their suggestions for the abandonment of the naval patrol scheme and for the recognition of belligerency; while it attempted to make these proposals less unacceptable.

Exempted are personnel serving in recognized non-Spanish medical, sanitary, or similar units.)

- (iii) Personnel engaged as instructors or advisers with the armed forces of either party.
- (iv) Personnel engaged in a civilian capacity with the armed forces of either party, e.g. lines of communication, naval shore establishments, &c.
- (v) Personnel engaged with either party in, or advisers to, government departments or other administrative offices, e.g. railways, ports, docks, &c.
- (vi) Personnel engaged in any capacity in the work of manufacture, assembly, or repair of war material (including aircraft) covered by the Non-Intervention Agreement.
- (vii) Personnel engaged in the arms trade with either party.
- (viii) 'Persons whose activities are in any way susceptible of prolonging or embittering the present conflict.' (As to be defined by the special sub-committee.)
- (ix) Prisoners of war held by either party.

table to France and Russia by providing a substitute for the patrol ships in the shape of observers at Spanish ports, by making the belligerent rights which it was proposed to grant subject to strict limitations (which were intended to meet the French objection that a recognition of belligerency would interfere with legitimate trade), and finally by interlocking recognition of belligerency and withdrawal of volunteers.

On the 16th July these proposals were unanimously adopted by the Non-Intervention Committee as a basis for discussion. This decision was reached in a shorter time and in a better atmosphere than had been expected, but the debate, brief as it was, foreshadowed the troubles that were to come. Thus, while Count Grandi expressed the opinion that the plan contained the essential elements of a solution, both he and Herr von Ribbentrop intimated that they would have detailed suggestions to make later on, and the German Ambassador also remarked that the 'form and timing of the execution' of the proposals would need careful study. As for Monsieur Maisky, he announced that his Government would put forward 'certain important modifications' of the British proposal at a later stage, thus making it clear that opposition to the recognition of belligerency was to be expected from this quarter.¹ The interdependence of the various proposals was, however, emphasized by Lord Plymouth, who

¹ The attitude of the Spanish Government, whose views were likely to be reflected in (or to reflect) that of the Soviet Government, was expressed by Señor Azaña in a speech delivered on the 18th July (the anniversary of the outbreak of the civil war). The President of the Spanish Republic described the British plan as a barefaced attempt to favour the Nationalists. The Spanish Government had already agreed in principle to let the volunteers serving with their forces go (see p. 303, above), and their attitude, and that of Russia, towards the British plan was probably determined principally by their belief that a partial withdrawal of volunteers (as opposed to a complete withdrawal) could not react in their favour even on the assumption that the number of General Franco's volunteers was much higher than the number on the Government's side. In the process of withdrawal, the first foreign troops to leave on either side would presumably be those who could most easily be dispensed with; and while there were indications (see p. 329, above, footnote 2) that General Franco might not be unwilling to part with some or all of the Italian infantry serving under his command, some or all of the members of the International Brigades could less easily be spared by the Spanish Government. Moreover, if, as appeared likely, 'substantial progress' in the withdrawal of volunteers were to be considered to have been achieved before General Franco had been called upon to part with any of the German and Italian technicians whose assistance was of great—and possibly vital—importance to him, the fact that the Government might also be able to retain the services of foreign technicians would at best equalize the position of the combatants in respect of foreign help, without giving the Government any advantage to counter-balance the benefits which the Nationalists were expected to derive from the recognition of belligerent rights.

pointed out that a substantial alteration of any part of the plan would affect his Government's attitude to the other parts; and Monsieur Corbin also laid stress on the relation between the granting of belligerent rights and the withdrawal of volunteers.

While the reception of the British plan, particularly by the 'Fascist' Powers, had on the whole been more favourable than had been expected, past experience had indicated that the line which Germany and Italy would most probably follow would be that of accepting the proposals in principle and wrangling over the details. The only unexpected feature of the situation which developed during the next few days was the rapidity and the openness with which the German and Italian Governments showed their hand.

The 'Fascist' Powers found an opportunity for the exercise of their favourite tactics in an accident of draftmanship. The order in which the various points were set out in the text of the British proposals (which had been drawn up in considerable haste) placed the question of granting belligerent rights before the question of withdrawing volunteers, and although this order was reversed in the last section of the plan (dealing with the immediate action to be taken by the British Government with the authorization of the Non-Intervention Committee), this discrepancy offered scope for endless arguments on procedure. A deadlock on the question of procedure arose as early as the 20th July, when the Chairman's Sub-Committee met in order to begin a detailed examination of the British proposals. Agreement was reached without much difficulty on the first point mentioned at the end of the plan under the heading of 'immediate action'. It was decided that a technical committee should be asked to prepare a detailed report on the question of observers in Spanish ports, covering such matters as which ports should be selected, the number of observers that would be needed, and whether any arrangements could be made for the coast-line between ports.¹ When Lord Plymouth attempted to direct the discussion on to the next item in the list of points on which immediate action was required—which was 'withdrawal of foreign volunteers'—he met with the most determined opposition from Count Grandi. The Italian Ambassador in-

¹ It will be remembered that the posting of observers in Spanish ports had been one item in the original suggestions for supervision which had been abandoned because it had seemed hopeless to expect the necessary co-operation from both parties in Spain (see p. 287, above). The observers under the new scheme would, however, have much less extensive duties than those contemplated in the first plan; they would only have to take over the duties of the patrol ships, and verify that merchant ships entering Spanish ports had complied with the procedure of taking an observer on board.

sisted that his Government had accepted the British plan as a basis for discussion, and that the various points must be taken in the order set out in the proposals; the re-establishment of control over land frontiers should therefore, in his view, be considered before the withdrawal of volunteers. Count Grandi was strongly supported by the German representative (Herr Woermann), who said that his Government were willing to discuss all the points on the British list, but could not agree to the question of belligerent rights being smothered as the question of Spanish gold had been smothered;¹ and the Portuguese representative also took the view that the most convenient plan would be to follow the order set out in the British memorandum. Monsieur Maisky, on the other hand, was no less insistent on the necessity for discussing the withdrawal of volunteers first, since the fulfilment of the whole plan was dependent upon the solution of that problem.

The meeting was adjourned without any agreement having been reached on the question whether withdrawal of volunteers was to be discussed before belligerent rights or *vice versa*. Diplomatic conversations which took place during the next few days in London did not break the deadlock, and on the 26th July the Chairman's Sub-Committee was only able to decide that Governments should be asked to submit their views on the British plan in writing before the 30th July.

The observations of the various Governments on the British proposals again failed to indicate any solution; instead, they produced a new complication. The German and Italian Governments, it was true, shifted their ground a little, but they did not move sufficiently far to open a way out of the *impasse*. They declared that they were ready to accept all the principal points in the British plan, but suggested that recognition of belligerent rights and withdrawal of volunteers ought to take place simultaneously (disregarding the fact that the former could be effected at a single stroke and the latter must necessarily take months to arrange and carry out). The French Government accepted the plan in its entirety, subject to strict regard for the principle which it laid down that the recognition of belligerent rights should not be accorded until there had been 'substantial progress' in the withdrawal of volunteers, and with some reservations in regard to the exercise of belligerent rights and the stage at which land control was to be restored. It was the Soviet Government who introduced the new difficulty at this stage. At the meeting on the 26th July Monsieur Maisky had remarked that his Government

¹ See p. 277 *n.*, above.

would in no circumstances grant belligerent rights to General Franco, and during the next few days he proceeded to dispel any hope that this remark might have been thrown out in a moment of intransigence without representing the considered policy of his Government. In an interview with the British Prime Minister on the 29th July, the Russian Ambassador announced the Soviet Government's refusal to consider the granting of belligerent rights at present—though he added that they might revise their views if and when all volunteers had left Spain—and he also reverted to his earlier contention¹ that the foreign nationals who were to be withdrawn from Spain must include General Franco's Moroccan troops.

The adoption of this attitude on the part of the Russian Government gave Germany and Italy the advantage of being able to claim that Russia was refusing to accept an integral part of the British plan and thus to shift the blame for the continuance of the deadlock from off their own shoulders. The British Government had suggested that the recognition of belligerent rights should take effect when 'substantial progress' had been made in the withdrawal of volunteers, and although the phrase 'substantial progress' might be, and no doubt would be, the subject of keen bargaining, it could hardly be taken to mean that the process of withdrawal must be completed before the recognition of belligerency could even be considered. At a meeting of the Chairman's Sub-Committee on the 30th July, which had been called to consider the comments on the British plan, Monsieur Maisky stuck to his guns, and Herr von Ribbentrop reserved his Government's attitude in the 'new situation' which the Russian attitude had created. The sub-committee was able to note that the Governments were in general agreement on the proposals for supervising traffic by sea (though Germany, Italy and Portugal had raised various points for discussion), but for the rest it could only agree that further explanations should be asked for from Moscow on the Russian attitude to the recognition of belligerency and from Berlin and Rome on the question of the simultaneous recognition of belligerency and withdrawal of volunteers.

The deadlock appeared to be more insoluble than ever, and the efforts to find a way out which were made through diplomatic channels during the first days of August were again unsuccessful—the exercise of French influence upon Moscow proving of no avail on this occasion. In these circumstances the British Government came to the conclusion that it would be best to isolate the only point in their proposals of the 14th July on which there seemed to be more or less

¹ See p. 302, above.

general agreement, and attempt to make progress on that. The system of patrolling part only of the coasts of Spain which had been in operation since the withdrawal of Germany and Italy from the patrol scheme was manifestly unsatisfactory, and the British Government hoped that it might be possible to reach agreement at any rate on measures which could be taken temporarily, pending a settlement of the questions of belligerency and withdrawal of volunteers. On the 6th August the Chairman's Sub-Committee accepted a British proposal that the Chairman and Secretary of the Non-Intervention Board (Vice-Admiral van Dulm and Mr. Francis Hemming) should be asked to prepare a report on means of 'restoring and improving' the naval observation scheme round the coasts of Spain. A general discussion at this meeting showed that Russia on the one hand and Germany and Italy on the other had still not moved from their respective positions,¹ and it appears to have been tacitly agreed that further discussion was useless, and that there was nothing to be done but to hope that time and continued diplomatic pressure would produce a change of policy.

During the rest of August the Foreign Offices of the Great Powers were preoccupied to a large extent with the situation in the Far East,² and any attention which they could spare for Mediterranean affairs had to be concentrated on the problem of attacks on foreign shipping, which had suddenly become a serious menace.³ No further meeting either of the Non-Intervention Committee or of the Chairman's Sub-Committee was held until the 27th August, when the sub-committee met to receive the report which Admiral van Dulm and Mr. Hemming had been asked to prepare. This report came to the conclusion that the results of the naval patrol system did not justify the expense of maintaining it, and that the suggestions for the appointment of observers in Spanish ports should be adopted. The Chairman and Secretary of the Non-Intervention Board supported their conclusions by giving details of the manner in which the obser-

¹ Monsieur Maisky tried to initiate a debate on the withdrawal of volunteers by asking whether Germany, Italy and Portugal would declare that they agreed unconditionally to withdrawal, but this attempt was defeated, and the Russian Ambassador found himself in a position of complete isolation. It was also revealed at this meeting that the finances of the Non-Intervention Committee were in a bad way, owing to the fact that Great Britain was the only state member of the Committee whose contribution was not in arrears. Assurances of early payment were given by the representatives of other countries and were carried out in sufficient measure to avert the danger that the working of the non-intervention system might break down for lack of funds.

² See vol. i, Part III.

³ See pp. 340 *seqq.*, below.

vation system had been evaded.¹ The van Dulm-Hemming Report was referred to the Governments represented on the Non-Intervention Committee for their observations,² but before any further action could be taken the crisis over the attacks on merchant ships in the Mediterranean had come to a head, and during the next few weeks the Conference at Nyon and the ensuing negotiations with Italy occupied the centre of the stage.

(j) ATTACKS ON SHIPPING IN THE MEDITERRANEAN AND THE NYON AGREEMENTS (AUGUST-SEPTEMBER 1937)

Between the 18th June, 1937 (the date of the alleged attack by a submarine on the German cruiser *Leipzig*), and the beginning of August there appear to have been hardly any³ instances of attacks by aeroplanes or warships in the service of either party in Spain upon merchant ships or warships flying the flags of other countries on the high seas, though there were several cases during July of the seizure by the Spanish Nationalists, in territorial waters, of British and French merchant vessels which were attempting to enter ports on the north coast of Spain.⁴ Early in August, however, there began a

¹ See p. 321 n., above.

² The Governments were asked to send in any comments that they might have by the 21st September, and were notified that if they omitted to do so it would be taken that they had no objections to the recommendations contained in the report. No objections were notified by the 21st September, and on that day a number of administrative changes in the observation system were introduced (including the designation of alternative ports at which observers could be taken on board and increases in the rate of pay of observing officers).

On the 29th September, after these changes had been put into force, the Soviet Government presented a note to the Chairman of the Non-Intervention Committee in which they expressed the opinion that the system of control had ceased to have any value now that the naval patrols had disappeared (France and Great Britain had also withdrawn their ships from patrol duty in the middle of September—see p. 348, below) and the control of land frontiers had been suspended, and that the application of the recommendations of the van Dulm-Hemming Report would do nothing to improve a situation in which the execution of the obligations of non-intervention depended solely upon the good faith of the contracting states. The Soviet Government's remedy for the situation would be, of course, to abandon the policy of non-intervention altogether and restore to the Spanish Government their full legal rights.

³ One British ship was reported to have been fired on in the Bay of Biscay on the 21st June.

⁴ After the fall of Bilbao on the 10th June the measures taken by the Nationalists to prevent foreign merchant ships from entering other ports on the north coast of Spain were more effective than they had been in the case of Bilbao (see pp. 307-9, above). A certain number of British ships managed to make their way to Gijón or Santander during the summer, in spite of warnings from the naval authorities that they would be wiser not to make the attempt, but in July three or four ships were seized when they were inside the three-mile

new phase, which was marked by indiscriminate attacks upon merchant ships using the Mediterranean as a highway, without warning or inquiry and without regard to the nationality of the vessel attacked, the nature of its cargo, or its port of destination. Moreover, this campaign of piracy was conducted not only by aircraft and surface warships but also—and this to an increasing extent as the month went on—by submarines, whose identity it was much more difficult to establish.

Hitherto, the *Leipzig* incident had been the only example of a reported submarine attack on non-Spanish shipping, but the Spanish Government, who had protested earlier in the year against alleged attacks by submarines on their ships and their coasts,¹ had recently been suffering more severely in this respect. In the week ending the 6th June five Spanish Government merchant ships were reported to have been attacked by submarines—three of them being sunk; another cargo-boat was sunk on the 26th June, and on the 29th July three tankers were fired at by two submarines which came to the surface. This was the prelude to the piratical attacks against non-Spanish ships which began early in August and increased in intensity until measures to deal with them were taken in accordance with the agreement which was reached (with a rapidity that was in notable contrast

limit. In accordance with the declared policy of the British Government, British warships did not intervene to prevent this action, but the Government made several demands for the release of ships which were detained by the Nationalists. According to a statement in the House of Commons on the 3rd November, seven British ships were seized and detained in ports under General Franco's control between the 24th July and the 5th October, and as a result of representations made by the British Ambassador at Hendaye the Nationalist authorities stated on the 31st October that orders for the release of all these vessels had been issued.

The French authorities, similarly, took no action in the case of the *Trégastel*, which was seized within the three-mile limit off Santander at the beginning of July (in this case the ship was released within a fortnight). There were two instances of the seizure of French ships during October, but both times the ship was released without delay.

On the 28th November, 1937, the Nationalist authorities announced once again their intention of imposing a blockade of the coast under the control of the Republican Government, and warned foreign shipping that the neutral zones at Valencia and Barcelona would no longer be respected. About a week later they issued a further warning that the blockade was being tightened and that mines would be sown along the whole coast. The British Government responded to this move by informing the Spanish Nationalist Government at Salamanca that their right to declare a blockade was not recognized; that British shipping would therefore continue to receive protection from interference; and that even if belligerent rights were to be accorded to the two Spanish parties, the sowing of mines in the manner proposed would be contrary to international law.

¹ See p. 258 *n.*, above.

to the normal pace of negotiations on Spanish questions) at Nyon in the middle of September.

On the 6th August three merchant ships, the *British Corporal*, *Mongoia* and *Djebel Amour*, flying respectively the British, the Italian and the French flag, were bombed by aircraft in the neighbourhood of Algiers. In each case the attacking aircraft was believed to belong to the Spanish Nationalists, although this was surprising in the case of the Italian *Mongoia* (the only one of the three on which casualties were inflicted) evidence to that effect was given by a non-intervention observer on board at the time. On the 7th August a Greek ship was bombed in the same neighbourhood. On the 11th a Spanish tanker, the *Campeador*, was torpedoed and sunk off Cape Bon (Tunisia); on the 12th, the Danish cargo boat *Edith* was sunk by aircraft off Barcelona; and on the 13th another Spanish cargo boat was sunk by a torpedo near Pantellaria. On the 13th also, there occurred the first instance of a submarine attack on a non-Spanish merchant ship; the French *Paramé* was attacked off Tunis, but escaped without damage. On the 14th August a tanker registered in Panamá was shelled and set on fire by an unknown warship near Tunis, and on the 15th yet another Spanish ship was sunk, this time off Tenedos. This made a total of ten ships attacked in as many days.

During the next ten days there were only two incidents—the torpedoing of another Spanish ship, again off Tenedos, and an attack by two aeroplanes on a British ship between Marseilles and Barcelona—but the pace quickened up again at the end of the month. On the 26th August a British ship reported having been bombed off Barcelona; on the 29th a Spanish steamer was shelled by a submarine off the French coast, and a French passenger steamer reported that she had been chased by a submarine into the Dardanelles; on the 30th the Russian *Timiryazev*, on passage from Cardiff to Port Said, was sunk by a submarine near Algiers. On the night of the 31st August–1st September, between Alicante and Valencia, a submarine attacked the British destroyer *Havock*, which retaliated with depth charges. On the 1st September another Russian ship was sunk by a torpedo off Skyros, and on the 2nd the British merchant ship *Woodford* suffered the same fate near Valencia.

By this time the indignation and anxiety to which this revival of piracy was giving rise in the countries whose ships had been, or might be, the victims of it had reached a pitch at which it was felt that some kind of collective action was called for in addition to the steps which were already being taken by the individual Governments in

the defence of their own interests.¹ The situation had been discussed on the 17th and again on the 25th August by members of the British Cabinet, some of whom had interrupted their holidays and returned to London for this purpose; and as a result orders had been issued that attacks by submarines were to be met by counter-attacks, additional destroyers had been sent to strengthen the British fleet in the Mediterranean, and General Franco had been warned that further attacks on British shipping would not be tolerated. The French Government, too, had taken further measures to protect their merchant ships by introducing a system of escort by seaplanes and destroyers for ships leaving Algerian ports for Marseilles. Before the end of August the French and British Governments had entered into consultation with a view to deciding what other action they could take in order to deal with the menace.

The aircraft which attacked ships of various nationalities during August were known or presumed to belong to the Nationalists, but the identity of the submarine or submarines whose activities were being felt over such a wide area was a question which never received an official answer. The Spanish Government, for their part, felt no doubt on this point. In a *communiqué* issued on the 18th August, in a note of the 21st August appealing to the League Council under Article 11 of the Covenant,² and in another note circulated to European Governments on the 22nd August, they openly accused the Italian Government of responsibility, declaring that the attacks on Spanish merchant ships were carried out by Italian submarines and destroyers.³ It has been mentioned⁴ that all the submarines belong-

¹ Among the Governments which had taken individual action before the end of August was that of Turkey, who was concerned not so much over the threat to her own merchant shipping as over the danger of complications arising out of attacks by submarines on non-Turkish ships in Turkish waters. After the incidents in the middle of August, when two Spanish ships were torpedoed and sunk near Tenedos, the Spanish Government made representations on this aspect of the matter in Angora, whereupon Kemal Ataturk and members of the Turkish General Staff returned hastily to the capital from Thrace, where they had been attending army manoeuvres, to examine the situation. The upshot of the Government's deliberations was an announcement by the Foreign Office on the 26th August that the presence of a foreign submarine in Turkish waters would be a violation of the Montreux Convention (see the *Survey for 1936*, Part IV, section (i)); that any submarine whose presence was detected would therefore be summoned to surrender; and that if it failed to surrender it would be sunk. In order to carry this decision into effect three Turkish warships were ordered to patrol the Sea of Marmara.

² See p. 352, below.

³ Surviving members of the crew of the Spanish tanker *Campredor*, which was sunk on the 12th August, reported that they had seen an Italian destroyer which had fired a torpedo at the ship.

⁴ See pp. 43, 318 n., above.

ing to the Spanish Navy at the outset of the civil war were believed to have remained in the possession of the Spanish Government (who declared that they could account for the whereabouts of all save one, and that although that one was missing they were confident that it had not gone over to the Nationalists); and this belief led to the assumption that, at any rate in the case of Spanish merchant ships which had been sunk by submarines, the vessels responsible were of foreign origin, though they might now be acting nominally under General Franco's orders.¹ It was indignantly denied in Rome that any Italian submarines were ever engaged in acts of piracy in the Mediterranean, and the Spanish Nationalists pointed to Russia as the villain of the piece. It was hardly to be supposed, however, that Russian submarines would have attacked the Spanish and Russian merchant ships which figured prominently among the victims, and though it was perhaps theoretically possible that two pirates of different 'ideological' complexions were at work at the same time, that assumption might incriminate Russia without absolving Italy. The Russian Government, indeed, were alone in giving open support to the Spanish Government's accusations against Italy, but the restraint which was exercised by other Governments in the matter was probably determined by policy rather than by a conviction of Italy's innocence. In France, at all events, little doubt seems to have been felt that the adoption of piratical methods was the latest move in Italy's campaign for ensuring General Franco's victory, and the incidents in the Mediterranean were taken all the more seriously in Paris because they coincided with a growing tendency on Signor Mussolini's part to abandon any pretence that Italy was not playing an active part in the war in Spain.

For some weeks past the Italian Press had been boasting openly of Italy's refusal to be neutral in the Spanish conflict and referring in laudatory terms to the achievements of the Italian legionaries in Spain—whose activities had also been described by Count Grandi, at a meeting of the Non-Intervention Committee on the 9th July, as an expression of an ancient and glorious tradition of his country. In a speech at Palermo on the 20th August, Signor Mussolini declared once more, in categorical terms, that Italy would not tolerate the establishment in the Mediterranean of 'Bolshevism or anything of a similar nature', and on the 27th August the Italian Press published the text of telegrams which Signor Mussolini had exchanged with

¹ General Queipo de Llano was said to have told a Press correspondent on the 9th September that the Nationalists had bought four submarines, which were operating in the Mediterranean.

General Franco on the occasion of the fall of Santander, together with a list of Italian casualties in the battle for Santander, and the names of twelve Italian Generals serving with General Franco's forces.¹

When Italy threw off the mask in this way, it became more difficult for other Governments to defend the policy of non-intervention against its critics, and in France (where this task had never been an easy one) the relative advantages and disadvantages of abandoning the fiction of non-intervention in order that the French frontier might be opened for the supply of munitions to the Spanish Government were under consideration in official circles at the end of August. The French Government also had in mind the possibility of raising the question of Italy's open intervention in Spain at a meeting of the Non-Intervention Committee in London. The question of the future of the policy of non-intervention, as well as the question of attacks on shipping in the Mediterranean, came under examination during Franco-British conversations at the turn of August and September, when it was agreed that no direct action should be taken in the matter of the exchange of telegrams between Signor Mussolini and General Franco, in order not to prejudice the chances of dealing with the urgent problem of attacks on shipping in the Mediterranean. It was also agreed that the best hope of finding a solution of that problem lay in holding a special Conference of the states principally interested and not in bringing it before the Non-Intervention Committee—the members of which had learnt by experience the difficulties in the way of reaching agreement for immediate action on any particular point among the whole complex of questions which came within the Committee's scope. The suggestion for a special Conference came from the French Government and was accepted by the British Foreign Minister on the 2nd September; and on the same day a meeting of Ministers in London, with the news of the attack on the *Havock* in mind, decided that, pending the holding of a Conference, it was necessary to strengthen still further the British naval forces in the Mediterranean.²

During the next few days the questions of where the Conference was to be held and what states were to be invited to take part in it were under discussion between Paris and London. It was agreed that the meeting-place should not be Geneva, in order not to give offence to Italy, but some town within easy reach of Geneva (where the eighteenth session of the League Assembly was due to open on

¹ See p. 182, above.

² Four more destroyers left for the Mediterranean on the 3rd September.

the 13th September); and Nyon was finally selected. The question of who were to be the participants in the Conference gave rise to more difficulty. France had originally suggested that all Mediterranean and Black Sea states with the exception of Spain, and only those states, should be invited, but the British Government felt that if Russia was to be included it was not possible to exclude Germany, and it was finally agreed that both Russia and Germany should be invited to attend.¹ On the 6th September joint Anglo-French invitations to attend a Conference at Nyon on the 10th September, in order to 'end the present state of insecurity in the Mediterranean and to ensure that the rules of international law regarding shipping at sea shall be strictly enforced', were issued to ten countries. Germany, Italy, Greece, Jugoslavia, Turkey, Egypt, Albania, the U.S.S.R., Rumania and Bulgaria.

At this stage the Soviet Government took a hand in the game. Russia was not comfortable in the position of isolation on the Non-Intervention Committee in which her stand on the question of belligerent rights² had placed her, and she seems to have feared that a Conference at which Italy and France and Great Britain would have a special bond of union, as the three Great Powers with the greatest interests in the Mediterranean, might result in the establishment of something like a common front between those Powers against Russia. She also suspected (and this no doubt with reason) that if Germany and Italy were represented at Nyon one of the objects of taking the discussion of the submarine menace away from the Non-Intervention Committee would be defeated; for the 'Fascist' Powers would certainly not neglect the opportunity of arguing that the recognition of belligerent rights would be the surest and quickest method of bringing the pirates to book. The Soviet Government therefore did their best to ensure that the Italian Government (and, with them, the German Government) should not accept the invitation to the Nyon Conference. On the 6th September, simultaneously with the delivery of the Franco-British invitation, a Russian note was handed to the Italian Foreign Minister alleging that Italian submarines had been responsible for the sinking of two Russian merchant ships on the 30th August and the 1st September respectively,³ and demanding compensation and the punishment of the guilty persons.

¹ On the principle of setting a thief to catch a thief, it would be an advantage if all the states (except Spain) which could be suspected of having a hand in the piracy could be associated in carrying out the arrangements which it was hoped to make.

² See pp. 337-8, above.

³ See p. 341, above.

This Russian move achieved its object. The Italian Government, in reply to the Soviet Government's note, immediately and categorically denied any responsibility for the sinking of the Russian ships and rejected the Russian demands, and during the next few days the Italian and German Governments consulted together in regard to the answers which they were to return to the Anglo-French invitation. On the 9th September both Governments notified the French and British Governments that they had decided not to send representatives to Nyon, and suggested that the most suitable procedure would be for the Mediterranean situation to be discussed by the Non-Intervention Committee instead of at a special Conference.

Before these formal replies were received it had already been clear what line Italy and Germany would take, and it had also become clear that France and Great Britain intended that the Conference should be held at Nyon with or without German and Italian participation. The French and British diplomatic representatives in Berlin and Rome were instructed to inform the Governments to which they were accredited that their inability to attend the Conference was regretted; that their suggestion for a reference of the whole problem to the Non-Intervention Committee was considered to be impracticable because of the need for speed; and that they would be kept informed of the developments at Nyon. Meanwhile, the invitations to the Conference had been accepted by all the other states¹ to whom they had been sent except Albania, who fulfilled expectations by following her patron Italy's lead and refusing to attend. Nine states were therefore represented—most of them by their Foreign Ministers—when the opening meeting of the Conference was held at Nyon on the 10th September.

The opening phase of the Conference, consisting of general statements of policy, was much shorter than was usual at such international gatherings. Monsieur Delbos, who was elected President, made a speech in which he avoided any suggestion that the Conference was called upon to apportion blame for the incidents which had occurred during the past six weeks,² and left the door open for the adherence of Germany and Italy to any arrangements that might

¹ The Russian note of acceptance criticized the invitation to Germany, who was not a Mediterranean or a Black Sea Power, and the omission of an invitation to the Spanish Government.

² Since the 2nd September, when the French and British Governments had decided to summon a conference, there had been no more cases of the torpedoing of merchant ships, and though a British tanker had been challenged by an unknown submarine near the island of Rhodes on the 6th September, she had been allowed to proceed on her way unharmed.

be decided upon Monsieur Litvinov introduced a more polemical note by repeating the Russian charges against Italy (though he did refrain from mentioning her by name) and by laying stress on the patent absurdity of the insinuation that Russian submarines had been responsible for the destruction of Russian ships. Mr. Eden, on the other hand, who was the only other speaker in the public debate, was as careful as Monsieur Delbos to avoid controversy, and he also expressed the hope that Germany and Italy would associate themselves with the decisions of the Conference. The Conference then constituted itself into a Standing Committee which met in private and got to work without delay on the basis of draft proposals which had been prepared for submission to the Conference by the French and British Governments in preliminary conversations in Paris.

This draft Franco-British plan—which dealt only with the most urgent aspect of the problem, that of attacks by submarines—provided for a system of zones in the Mediterranean, in the patrolling of which all the riparian states would take part, with Russia co-operating in the Eastern Mediterranean. It immediately became apparent, however, that the smaller riparian states, whose principal spokesman was Jugoslavia,¹ were unwilling to accept the burdens which this arrangement would impose upon them, and even Russia showed no anxiety to play the part assigned to her. An alternative plan was worked out with almost unprecedented rapidity; this had been approved by all the delegations by the evening of the 11th September; and after a few days' interval, necessitated by the insistence of certain delegates (including Monsieur Litvinov) upon referring the text to their Governments before affixing their signatures to it, an agreement was signed on the 14th September.

The provisions of the Nyon Agreement² were summarized as follows in a statement which was issued to the Press on the 11th September:

In the preamble it is made clear that the participating Governments, in agreeing to special collective measures to be taken against piratical

¹ Jugoslavia no doubt had in mind not only the inadequacy of her naval resources but also the possibility that patrolling a zone might involve her in complications with Italy (for Italo-Jugoslav relations in 1937, see vol. i, Part IV, section (vii)). There was also a risk that a state with small naval resources might find itself in an invidious position if one or more incidents were to occur in the zone allocated to it. In such a case the reputation of the state might suffer, even though the deduction that it had ulterior motives for not carrying out its preventive duties with sufficient thoroughness might be quite unjustified.

² The text of the agreement was published as the British White Paper Cmd. 5568 of 1937. It will be found in *Documents on International Affairs*, 1937, vol. ii.

acts perpetrated by submarines, do not mean to concede to either of the parties in Spain the right to exercise belligerent rights.

The agreement provides that the naval forces of the participating Powers will counter-attack, and if possible destroy, any submarine which attacks, contrary to the rules of international law as laid down by the London Naval Treaty of 1930, merchant ships not belonging to either party to the Spanish conflict.

They will take the same action in regard to any submarine encountered in the vicinity of a position where a merchant vessel has just been attacked in circumstances which give valid ground for the belief that the submarine was guilty of the attack in question.

In the Western Mediterranean and in the Malta Channel, with the exception of the Tyrrhenian Sea, which may form the subject of special arrangement, the British and French fleets will give practical effect to the decisions of the Conference.

In the Eastern Mediterranean the decision of the Conference will be carried out in so far as territorial waters are concerned by the riparian Powers. On the high seas it will be entrusted, with the exception of the Adriatic Sea, to the British and French fleets.

The other riparian Governments will provide, so far as their means allow, such assistance as may be asked of them and, in particular, will allow for use such of their ports as they may indicate.

In order to facilitate the execution of this measure no submarine of the participating Powers will put to sea in the Mediterranean unless accompanied by a surface vessel or in certain zones to be defined for the purpose of exercise.

The Powers will not admit entry into their respective territorial waters of any foreign submarine except in the case of urgent distress or except where a submarine is proceeding accompanied and on the surface.

They will advise their merchant shipping to follow certain main routes in the Mediterranean to be agreed upon between them.

The Nyon Agreement came into force at midnight on the 14th-15th September. The French and British fleets in the Mediterranean were still further reinforced in order to enable them to carry out their new duties, and on the 16th September the Chairman of the Non-Intervention Committee was formally notified that the two Governments had decided to use the ships which had hitherto been engaged in patrolling the coast of Spain under the observation scheme, for the purpose of protecting non-Spanish merchant ships in the Mediterranean. The patrol scheme therefore came to an end on the 17th September, though the system of embarking observers on ships bound for Spain remained in force.¹

On the conclusion of the agreements of the 14th September, which, in the opinion of the naval experts who had drafted it, was likely to

¹ This was in accordance with the recommendations contained in the van Dulm-Hemming Report (see pp. 338-9, above).

act as an almost complete deterrent to further submarine piracy,¹ the delegates turned their attention to the question of dealing with piratical attacks by surface warships and aircraft. The discussions were transferred to Geneva, where the meetings of the League Council and Assembly were now in progress, and on the 17th September a supplementary agreement was signed.² This provided that pirate aircraft should receive the same treatment as pirate submarines—that is, aircraft which attacked without warning or failed to provide for the safety of those on board the ship were to be fired on and if possible destroyed by the patrol ships. Since it would evidently be most difficult for an aeroplane (at any rate for one which wished to preserve its anonymity) to comply with these rules, the agreement meant in effect that any attack by aircraft on a non-Spanish ship would render the aircraft liable to destruction. This arrangement was of special importance as the first attempt to enforce respect for humanitarian principles upon aircraft; but if it was more difficult for aeroplanes than for submarines to follow the procedure laid down by international law, it was also easier for them to escape the consequences of their acts; and while the number of attacks upon merchant ships from the air did diminish after the conclusion of the agreement, the nuisance did not by any means cease.³ The supplementary Nyon Agreement also laid it down that a warship which attacked any non-Spanish merchant ship in defiance of the rules laid down in the Naval Treaties would be counter-attacked by patrolling ships, whether the incident occurred on the high seas or in territorial

¹ This opinion appeared to be justified by the event. At the beginning of October H.M.S. destroyer *Basilisk* was reported to have been attacked by a submarine, but on investigation this report was proved to be unfounded, and there were no more cases of submarine attacks on non-Spanish ships until the end of January 1938, when the apparent success of the measures adopted at Nyon had led to a reduction in the strength of the patrolling ships.

² The text was published as the British White Paper *Cmd. 5569* of 1937.

³ There were two instances of aeroplanes attacking British merchant ships while the Nyon Conference was in session, and on the 17th September bombs were dropped near the destroyer *Fearless*. On the 21st September a French passenger liner was attacked; on the 7th October an Italian steamer reported an attack by an unidentified seaplane; there were two more attacks on British ships on the 8th and 21st October respectively; and French ships were attacked on the 4th and 29th November. In none of these cases was any damage done, but on the 24th October the French steamer *Oued Mellah* had to be abandoned after being heavily bombed near Barcelona (her crew were taken off by two French destroyers which answered her signals), on the 25th October an Air France commercial air base on the island of Minorca was bombed by a seaplane and a repair ship was struck and set on fire; and on the 30th October the British merchant ship *Jean Weems* was sunk by bombs from a seaplane, after five minutes' warning of the attack had been given (the crew was able to reach land in safety).

waters (subject to the qualification, which was inserted into the agreement on the initiative of Greece, that the Powers signatories of the agreement should be free to decide for themselves upon what action they should take in their own territorial waters).

While this supplementary agreement was being drafted, negotiations had been going on with the object of securing the participation of Italy in the new arrangements. There had been no opposition at the Conference (apparently not even from Russia) to the idea that Italy should be invited to share with France and Great Britain the task of patrolling the seas in which the attacks by submarines had been taking place, and in the text of the agreement of the 14th September no explicit provision had been made for the policing of the Tyrrhenian Sea (which might, it was explained, 'form the subject of special arrangements'), while the Adriatic Sea had also been excluded from the zone in which the French and British Navies were to operate. The text of the agreements of the 14th and 17th September was communicated to the Italian Government before signature, and on the 13th September, when the first of the documents was presented to the Italian Foreign Minister, the French and British diplomatic representatives in Rome conveyed a formal invitation to Italy to take over the policing of the Tyrrhenian Sea.

Italy had been watching the proceedings at Nyon with mixed feelings. It was an unpleasant surprise that the refusal of Italy and Germany to attend the Conference should have made no difference to the plans of France and Great Britain and should not even have caused them to postpone the opening date; and the ease and rapidity with which agreement was reached in the absence of Germany and Italy also came as something of a shock, though, at the same time, it provided occasion for a good deal of caustic comment on the contrast between the speed with which the 'democratic' Great Powers could act when their own interests were at stake and their dilatoriness when the interests of others were concerned—for example, over the *Leipzig* affair. It was no part of the policy of the 'Fascist' Powers to promote even closer co-operation between France and Great Britain than already existed, and Italy could hardly look forward with any satisfaction to the prospect of being the only Mediterranean state which had not undertaken to help in hunting down submarine pirates. It certainly appeared to be to her interest to pass through the door which France and Great Britain were carefully keeping open; the way was made easier for her by the abstention of Russia from taking part in the arrangements; and she seems to have been advised by Berlin to make the best terms for herself that she

could. It was, however, too much to hope for that France and Great Britain should be able to come to terms with Italy without further ado. The Powers which had attended the Nyon Conference could not be expected to keep their arrangements for dealing with an urgent problem in suspense to suit the convenience of an absentee, and could therefore reserve only a subordinate rôle for Italy; and on the other hand Italy, with her peculiar sensitiveness in regard to her position as the only purely Mediterranean Great Power, could not be expected to accept any but a major part in the policing of her own sea. It caused no surprise, therefore, when the Italian Government, in reply to the Franco-British invitation of the 13th September, declared that they could not accept the Tyrrhenian zone which was offered to them, and that their vital interests demanded 'absolute parity' with any other state in any part of the Mediterranean.

Italy, however, had left the door ajar in her turn, and while she did not state explicitly that she would co-operate in the Nyon arrangements if she were accorded parity, the material for an agreement on those lines was clearly not lacking. While the supplementary Nyon agreement was under negotiation there was an interval during which hints were thrown out that Italy did not think it consistent with her dignity to make the next move, but that she would not reject a Franco-British overture. France and Great Britain, having demonstrated their solidarity and their ability to act swiftly and effectively for the protection of the Mediterranean shipping routes—thereby considerably enhancing their prestige, especially in the eyes of the lesser Central and South-East European states—could afford the gesture of opening the door a little wider; and when their diplomatic representatives in Rome presented the text of the supplementary Nyon Agreement to Count Ciano on the 18th September, they gave the Italian Government another opening by asking for an interpretation of the Italian reply of the 14th September which would show whether Italy was willing to take part in the piracy patrol or not. The response to this request was a statement that what Italy was claiming was a share in the patrol system equal to that of France or Great Britain; the French and British Governments agreed that this was a satisfactory basis for further negotiation; and on the 21st September the Italian Government accepted an invitation to send naval experts to Paris to discuss the adjustment of the Nyon arrangements in order to include Italy.

The result of this diplomatic manœuvring was that either side felt that it had scored a success; and this comfortable state of mind opened the way for a somewhat unexpected next step in the shape of

Franco-Italian conversations which covered not only the question of policing the Mediterranean but also the wider issues to which the attitude of Italy had presented an obstacle hitherto. The outcome of these conversations, which took place at Geneva on the 22nd September, is described elsewhere;¹ it is only necessary to note here that Monsieur Delbos was reported to have given the Italian representative an assurance that the Italian claim to parity in the policing of the Mediterranean would receive sympathetic consideration. These Franco-Italian conversations therefore helped to create a favourable atmosphere for the naval discussions which began in Paris on the 27th September.

The exchange of views between the naval experts of France, Great Britain and Italy did in fact proceed harmoniously, and although certain questions were raised which had to be referred by the experts to their Governments,² no real difficulty was experienced in coming to an understanding. The text of the agreement which was signed on the 30th September was not made public, but, according to information which was subsequently published in the Italian Press, the Italian Navy was made responsible for zones in the Central and Eastern Mediterranean and for the zone between the Balcaric Islands and Sardinia, as well as for the Tyrrhenian Sea. There was a delay of more than a month before Italy was ready to take over her share of the piracy patrol, which was carried out in the meantime by the French and British fleets; but the final details regarding the division of the work were decided at a conference between Italian, French and British naval officers in a British warship off Biserta on the 30th October, and Italian participation in the arrangements became effective on the 11th November.

(k) DISCUSSION OF THE SPANISH QUESTION AT MEETINGS OF THE LEAGUE COUNCIL AND ASSEMBLY (SEPTEMBER–OCTOBER 1937)

The Spanish question had been placed on the agenda for the ninety-eighth session of the League Council, which began at Geneva on the 10th September, 1937, as the result of a request which had been made by the Spanish Government on the 21st August. In a telegram which was despatched to Geneva on that day, the Spanish Government appealed to the Council, under Article 11 of the Covenant, to examine without delay the situation in which Spanish merchant ships were

¹ See p. 358.

² The difficulties were understood to have arisen in connexion with the exact delimitation of the area to be patrolled by Italy.

suffering 'criminal and repeated aggressions . . . at the hands of the Italian Navy'.¹ They left it, however, to the League Secretariat to decide whether an extraordinary session of the Council should be summoned to deal with their appeal, and, after consulting various Governments, the Secretary-General decided that a special meeting was not necessary, as the next ordinary session was due to begin in less than three weeks' time.

Between the date of the Spanish Government's appeal and the date of the Council meeting, the Nyon Conference was summoned, and the Spanish Government found a fresh cause for protest in the fact that they were not among the Governments which were invited to send representatives to the Conference. The reason for the omission of Spain from the list of states invited to Nyon was not, of course, far to seek. The Nationalist régime at Burgos was at least as much involved as the Government at Valencia in the questions which would be under discussion, so that for practical purposes there would have been little point in inviting the latter and not the former; but the possibility of sending an invitation to both combatants, which would have raised the awkward question of the Nationalists' status, does not appear to have been seriously considered. Moreover, the absence of a representative of either party in Spain was likely to promote the object which France and Great Britain had in mind in summoning a special Conference—that is, to cut through political complications and arrive rapidly at concrete decisions—and with the same object they deliberately excluded from the consideration of the Conference the question of attacks upon Spanish shipping in the Mediterranean. Since merchant ships flying the Spanish Government's flag had suffered very heavily from attacks of the kind that were described as piratical when they were launched against ships of other nationalities, it was not surprising that the Spanish Government should have felt aggrieved at the limitation of the Nyon discussions to the question of attacks upon non-Spanish shipping; and at an interview with members of the French Government in Paris on the 9th September, Señor Negrín, the head of the Spanish Republican Government, protested against the omission of Spain from the states to be represented at Nyon, and announced his intention of raising at the meeting of the League Council the question of the extension of any arrangements which might be made at Nyon to Spanish shipping.

Señor Negrín carried out this intention on the 16th September, when the Spanish appeal of the 21st August came up for consideration

¹ See p. 342, above.

by the Council.¹ Having registered a strong protest against the exclusion of Spain from the Nyon Conference, Señor Negrín proceeded to criticize the results which had so far been achieved by the Conference on two main grounds: that the collective protection for which provision was being made applied only to foreign shipping, and that there was no provision for collective action in the case of attacks that were not piratical (attacks, that is, by submarines which complied with the rules laid down in the Naval Treaties in the matter of giving warning and providing for the safety of the crew). Señor Negrín urged that this distinction between legal and illegal attacks ought to be abolished and that all shipping in the Mediterranean, Spanish and non-Spanish alike, ought to be given the benefit of collective protection against any hostile action by submarines, surface vessels, or aircraft. He declared that his Government would have no objection to the entry of patrolling vessels into Spanish territorial waters in the fulfilment of their duties—an offer of which advantage was taken in drafting the terms of the supplementary Nyon Agreement which was signed on the following day.² Señor Negrín also appealed to the other members of the Council to abandon 'fiction and make-believe' and to recognize that the attacks on merchant shipping in the Mediterranean were not a natural phenomenon the causes of which could not be discovered, but were the work of Italian warships. This appeal, as was to be expected, met with no response, and indeed the only advantage which the Spanish Government derived from their representations to the Council was again that of additional publicity for their case. Señor Negrín was answered on the 16th September by Monsieur Delbos, who defended the usefulness and effectiveness of the Nyon arrangement, but held out no hope that Spanish shipping would be able to share in the increased security which he expected the arrangement to provide. The resolution which the Council finally adopted on the 4th October (after an interval during which the Spanish question had come before the Assembly of the League)³ did not deal with the

¹ The Republican Government of which Señor Negrín was the head might control only part—and that not the larger part—of Spain, and they might have to suffer the indignity of exclusion from a Mediterranean Conference, but their right to represent at Geneva a state member of the League and of the Council was still not contested. Ironically enough, it happened to be the turn of the Spanish representative to preside over the meeting of the Council, and Señor Negrín vacated the chair when this point in the agenda was reached. The Spanish Government's term of office as a member of the Council expired at the eighteenth session of the Assembly, and although they submitted a request to be considered re-eligible, in accordance with the rules of procedure governing elections to the Council, when the vote was taken on the 20th September, 1937, they failed to secure the necessary two-thirds majority in favour of their re-eligibility.

² See pp. 349–50, above.

³ See pp. 355 *segg.*, below.

protection of Spanish shipping and did not even meet the Spanish Government's criticism that the Nyon arrangement appeared to sanction the continuance of attacks upon merchant shipping which were not of a piratical nature. The resolution merely observed that the measures agreed upon at Nyon had 'proved effective', noted that attacks had taken place 'in violation of the most elementary dictates of humanity underlying the established rules of international law which are affirmed so far as wartime is concerned in Part 4 of the Treaty of London of the 22nd April, 1930', and declared that 'all attacks of this kind against any merchant vessel are repugnant to the conscience of the civilized nations which now finds expression through the Council'. This resolution was accepted on the Spanish Government's behalf by Señor de Azcárate, but he explained that its terms did not satisfy his Government, who reserved the right to raise the question of the protection of Spanish shipping in the Mediterranean in the event of further attacks.

Meanwhile, a resolution which did go some way towards giving satisfaction to the Spanish Government had been produced, with considerable difficulty, by a Committee of the Assembly, but had failed to secure formal adoption by the Assembly. The Spanish question was brought within the competence of the Assembly on the 18th September by Señor Negrín, who asked that the chapter of the Secretary-General's report on the past year which gave an account of the action taken by the Council in regard to Spain should be referred to the Sixth (Political) Committee of the Assembly. This was a method of reopening the whole question of the attitude of the League towards the situation in Spain; and the object of the Spanish Government in making this move was presumably to ascertain whether their thesis that Italy and Germany were guilty of aggression against Spain would receive a greater measure of support in the Assembly than it had received on two earlier occasions in the Council.¹ Señor Negrín denounced the action of the 'Fascist' Powers and the failure of the policy of non-intervention in much the same terms as Señor Álvarez del Vayo had employed at Geneva four months earlier, and the decision which he invited the Assembly to make also followed the line which the Spanish Government had taken in their appeals to the Council. The programme which he recommended to the consideration of the Assembly had five heads:

- (1) That the aggression of Germany and Italy in Spain be recognized as such.
- (2) That, in consequence of this recognition, the League examine as

¹ See pp. 262 *segg.*, 302-4, above.

rapidly as possible the means by which that aggression may be brought to an end.

(3) That full rights once more be given to the Spanish Government freely to acquire all the war material [that] it may consider necessary.

(4) That the non-Spanish combatants be withdrawn from Spanish territory.

(5) That the measures to be adopted for security in the Mediterranean be extended to Spain, and that Spain be granted her legitimate share in them.

If Señor Negrín hoped to rally to his Government's support some of the smaller states members of the League whose voices had not been heard on the Council and who, on previous occasions, had made their influence felt to some purpose in the Assembly, he must have been disappointed by the character of the general debate on the Secretary-General's report, which showed a tendency on the part of most of the delegates to confine themselves to innocuous generalizations. In many speeches there was no direct reference to either of the two simultaneous wars under the shadow of which the Assembly was meeting; and of the delegates who did deal with the situation in Spain only Monsieur Litvinov and the representative of Mexico came out openly in support of the Spanish Government (it was also notable, however, that an open opposition to Valencia was displayed by only one delegate, Senhor Caeiro da Matta of Portugal). The discussion did not produce any practicable suggestions for a policy that could be adopted as an alternative to the policy of non-intervention,¹ but it was significant that the speeches of the statesmen who had been the principal advocates of that policy struck a note of doubt as to the possibility of maintaining it which had not been heard (or at any rate had not been heard so clearly) in the earlier debates on the Spanish question at Geneva. The policy of non-intervention, said Monsieur Delbos (whose speech followed immediately upon that of Señor Negrín on the 18th September),

is possible only if it is observed by all, with effective supervision, and

¹ The Norwegian delegate, Dr. Koht, suggested that the League should invite the two parties in Spain to agree to an armistice in order that a referendum might be taken, under League auspices, to decide what form of Government the country as a whole desired. There was no support for this idea from other speakers; but in the third week of October another suggestion that an attempt should be made to promote a peaceful settlement of the conflict came from a Latin-American country. The author of this proposal, which was for common action by the American nations, was Cuba; but the Cuban initiative was no more successful than the earlier steps in this direction. Uruguay seems to have been the only state whose Government responded favourably to the suggestion. It was rejected by the United States Government for the same reasons which had led them to refuse to consider similar proposals in August 1936 (see pp. 271-2).

particularly if there is unanimous and sincere acceptance of a common law requiring in particular that each country should withdraw those of its nationals who are taking part in the civil war. If this is not done, and particularly if the influx of combatants and arms increases, the danger will become far greater on account of another aspect of the problem—the menace of a disequilibrium detrimental to the legitimate interests and vital needs of other countries.

Mr Eden, who addressed the Assembly on the 20th September, affirmed his belief that the policy of non-intervention had 'played the main part in preventing a European conflict' and that the 'main object for which the policy was created' had thus so far been achieved; but he also referred to the 'wide breaches of the agreement' which had created 'a state of affairs pregnant with danger for the peace of Europe', and he envisaged the possibility of a situation in which the policy of non-intervention would have broken down completely.

If non-intervention now has to be discarded, it will not be for lack of patience on the part of its original sponsors. Let us not, however, conceal from ourselves this patent fact: if the policy of non-intervention is abandoned, Europe will be swept into deeper and more dangerous waters. A leaky dam may yet serve its purpose. . . .¹

The question of Spain, which was referred to the Political Committee of the Assembly in accordance with Señor Negrín's request, did not come before that Committee until the 27th September, and in the interval Monsieur Delbos and Mr. Eden had taken an initiative which was designed to avert the danger of a break-down of the policy of non-intervention to which they had drawn attention in their speeches before the Assembly. While the primary object of the French and British Governments' policy in regard to Spain during the first three weeks of September had been the conclusion of arrangements for putting an end to attacks on shipping in the Mediterranean, they had also continued their consultation on the wider issues, and in particular they had discussed the best line to follow in view of the *impasse* which had been reached at the meeting of the Non-Intervention Committee in August.² The French Government appear to have intimated that unless the situation changed rapidly it would not be possible for them, in the interests of French security, to avoid a decision to throw open the Franco-Spanish frontier for the transport of men and munitions to the Spanish Republicans, in order to counterbalance the activities of the 'Fascist' Powers in Spain. By the time when the work of the Nyon Conference was brought to an end by the signature of the supplementary agree-

¹ See p. 158, above, for the earlier use of this metaphor by British statesmen.

² See pp. 337-8, above.

ment of the 17th September, however, it had been agreed between France and Great Britain that a decision on the question of opening the Franco-Spanish frontier should be postponed for a further limited period, and that in the interval a fresh attempt should be made to persuade the 'Fascist' Powers to agree to the withdrawal of their nationals from Spain on terms which might be acceptable to the Soviet Government—whose persistence in their refusal to consider the recognition of belligerent rights until all foreign nationals had been withdrawn from Spain still blocked any progress along the lines of the compromise which the British Government had suggested.

An opening for such an attempt was offered when, a few days later, a wide range of questions interesting France and Italy was reviewed in the course of conversations between Monsieur Delbos and Signor Bova-Scoppa at Geneva.¹ No official account of the conversations, which took place on the 22nd September, was published, but Monsieur Delbos was said to have asked for guarantees that Italy would not send any more troops to Spain, that she did not intend the troops who were already in that country to stay there after hostilities had ceased (particularly in regions rich in raw materials), and that she did not contemplate establishing herself in control of the Balearic Islands. Signor Bova-Scoppa was reported to have given definite assurances on all these points, and he stated categorically 'that Italy had no intention of making the smallest change in the territorial status of Spain; that she had no designs upon the Balearic Islands, and that the integrity of the Continental and insular territory of Spain would be strictly respected'.² Monsieur Delbos received these assurances with satisfaction, but he intimated that something more concrete than a repetition of pledges was needed, and suggested that the withdrawal of Italian nationals from Spain would be the best proof of Italy's good faith.

The results of this interview were communicated to the British Government, who themselves received an assurance from the Italian Government on the same day that there was 'no present intention of permitting the despatch of further volunteers to Spain'.³ In the light of this assurance, the British Government associated themselves with the suggestion (which appears to have been made by Monsieur Delbos to Signor Bova-Scoppa) that the forthcoming Anglo-Franco-Italian conversations in Paris on the inclusion of Italy in the Nyon

¹ See also vol. i, pp. 332-3.

² Quoted from the English text of the Anglo-French note to Italy of the 2nd October (see below, p. 363).

³ *Ibid.*

arrangements¹ might be followed by further tripartite conversations on the Spanish question as a whole, with the special object of finding a solution for the problem of withdrawing volunteers. The Italian Foreign Minister was informed by the French and British diplomatic representatives in Rome on the 24th September of the readiness of France and Great Britain to enter into such negotiations, and during the following week a joint Anglo-French note, setting forth the views of the two Governments as to the problems which might suitably be discussed in the proposed conversations, was in preparation for presentation to Italy.

On the 27th September, therefore, when the Political Committee of the Assembly began to discuss the Spanish question, there appeared to be some prospect that a way out of the deadlock over volunteers in Spain might be found by means of an Anglo-French approach to Italy,² and this fact coloured the discussions in the Sixth Committee to a considerable extent. The speech in which the Spanish representative (Señor Álvarez del Vayo) opened the debate covered the same ground as Señor Negrín's speech at the plenary session of the Assembly and asked for the same action,³ but Señor Álvarez del Vayo's tone was bitter, and he laid stress on his Government's belief that Italy, in spite of her assurances to France, was actually preparing to send another, and even larger, expeditionary force to Spain.⁴ After several of the other members of the Committee had made speeches which showed that the attitudes of their respective Governments had not undergone any change, a drafting committee was appointed to prepare the text of a resolution, and it was at the meetings of this committee that the real conflict of wills was fought out, with the French and British representatives as the protagonists on one side, and the Spanish and Russian representatives on the other. A draft resolution presented by the British delegate, Mr. Walter Elliott, suggested that another appeal should be made to the Powers represented on the Non-Intervention Committee to carry out their pledges, coupled with a warning that unless there was an improvement in this respect the policy of non-intervention might have to be abandoned. This was not nearly strong enough for Señor Álvarez del Vayo and Monsieur Litvinov, who wanted a resolution which incorporated Señor Negrín's five points. Under pressure from the French and British delegates, however, Señor Álvarez del Vayo

¹ See p. 352, above.

² For the outcome of the Anglo-French *démarche* see pp. 362 *seqq.*, below.

³ See pp. 355-6, below.

⁴ Señor Negrín had also told the Assembly that the Government at Valencia had information to this effect.

gradually modified his demands. By the 29th September he had agreed to the omission from the resolution of any provision for League action against Germany and Italy and of the Spanish claim to participation in the Nyon arrangements; and at a meeting of the drafting committee on that day he was persuaded by Monsieur Blum (who was attending as the representative of France) not to insist upon actually naming Germany and Italy as aggressors or upon the immediate restoration to his Government of their liberty to buy munitions, in order not to prejudice the chances of success in the conversations with Italy which the French and British Governments hoped to arrange. The drafting committee finally agreed upon a text in which, after the obligation of states to refrain from intervening in the affairs of another state had been recalled, there was an expression of regret (paragraph 4)

that not merely has the London Non-Intervention Committee failed, despite the efforts of the majority of its Members, of which the Assembly expresses its appreciation, to secure the withdrawal of non-Spanish combatants taking part in the struggle in Spain, but that it must to-day be recognized that there are veritable foreign army corps on Spanish soil, which represents foreign intervention in Spanish affairs.

The resolution went on to express the hope 'that the diplomatic action recently initiated by certain Powers' would 'be successful in securing the immediate and complete withdrawal of the non-Spanish combatants taking part in the struggle in Spain'; and, having appealed to the Governments 'to undertake a new and earnest effort in this direction' it noted (in paragraph 7) that

if such a result cannot be obtained in the near future, the Members of the League which are parties to the Non-Intervention Agreement will consider ending the policy of non-intervention.

Finally it requested the Council 'to follow attentively the development of the situation in Spain and to seize any opportunity that may arise for seeking a basis for a pacific solution of the conflict'.

Although this resolution fell far short of the decisions for which the Spanish Government had originally asked, it was couched in considerably stronger terms than any resolution on the situation in Spain which had hitherto been adopted by an organ of the League of Nations. The reference to the 'veritable foreign army corps' whose presence on Spanish soil constituted 'foreign intervention in Spanish affairs' went a good deal farther than any previous resolution towards proclaiming the fact of aggression in Spain; while the Spanish and Russian Governments were also encouraged to hope either for 'the immediate and complete withdrawal' of foreign volunteers (which

might give the Republicans an advantage),¹ or for the abandonment of the policy of non-intervention, which would restore their liberty to buy munitions in any market that would supply them.² Naturally enough, the passages in the resolution which gave the greatest satisfaction to the Spanish delegation and induced them to accept this half-loaf with a good grace were also those to which the strongest exception was taken by certain other delegations. The resolution was adopted by the Political Committee on the 30th September only after a long discussion, in which the opposition was led by Mr. de Valera, who objected to paragraph 7 on the ground that the terms of that paragraph would pledge those who accepted it to abandon the policy of non-intervention if no agreement for the withdrawal of volunteers were reached within a short time, and that Governments ought to be left free to decide for themselves whether or not to reconsider their attitude towards non-intervention. When the resolution was put to the vote, the representatives of six states—Austria, Bulgaria, Hungary, the Irish Free State, Portugal, and South Africa—abstained, but no adverse votes were cast. The resolution was therefore passed on to the Assembly for formal adoption at a plenary session.

In spite of the opposition which was thus revealed, the result of the Assembly's vote on the Sixth Committee's resolution caused general surprise. In the debate on the resolution, which took place on the 2nd October, Mr. de Valera reiterated his objections to paragraph 7, though he declared that his Government would have been prepared to accept the greater part of the resolution; and the Austrian and Hungarian delegations introduced amendments which were designed to make the resolution more acceptable both to General Franco's sympathizers and to states which shared Mr. de Valera's point of view.³ These amendments were defeated by a substantial majority,

¹ It has been noted (see p. 334, above, footnote) that the objections of Russia and of Republican Spain were not to a complete withdrawal but to the recognition of belligerency when only a partial withdrawal had been achieved. The Sixth Committee's resolution made no mention of the recognition of belligerent rights, but that did not mean that France and Great Britain had given up the idea of offering such recognition in return for the withdrawal of volunteers.

² According to Press reports Señor Alvarez del Vayo accepted the resolution only after he had received an assurance from the French and British delegates that the words 'in the near future' meant that there was to be a definite time limit to the negotiations with Italy: in fact, that if a satisfactory reply to the joint Anglo-French note had not been received within ten days a decision would be taken on the question of continuing the policy of non-intervention.

³ If these amendments had been adopted, the words 'army corps on Spanish soil' would have been replaced by the words 'armed forces on both sides on Spanish soil'; and the second part of paragraph 7 would have read 'certain members of the League which are parties to the Non-Intervention Agreement might consider ending the policy of non-intervention'.

but when the original resolution was put to the vote it also was defeated by the adverse vote of two states: Portugal and Albania. There were fourteen abstentions (consisting of the five other states, besides Portugal, which had abstained in the Sixth Committee, Switzerland, and eight Latin-American states)¹ and thirty-two states voted in favour of the resolution. Since the majority included France, Great Britain, and the U.S.S.R as well as all but four of the other states members of the Non-Intervention Committee which were represented at the Assembly, the moral force of the resolution was hardly affected by the fact that Portugal and Albania (who could not have been expected in any case to vote in favour of a resolution which condemned the action of Italy in maintaining armed forces in Spain) had plucked up courage to vote against the resolution instead of refraining from recording their votes.

(l) THE QUESTION OF WITHDRAWING VOLUNTEERS AND GRANTING BELLIGERENT RIGHTS (OCTOBER-DECEMBER 1937).

The hopes which were entertained at Geneva in the last week of September that the new Anglo-French approach to Italy might provide a way out of the non-intervention *impasse* were not fulfilled. Signor Mussolini's visit to Germany,² which took place on the 25th-29th September, provided the occasion for a reaffirmation of the principles on which the Rome-Berlin Axis was based, and the references to the Spanish question in the speeches delivered by the Führer and the Duce made it appear extremely improbable that the near future would see that change in Italian policy which would be necessary if the Anglo-French *démarche* was to achieve its object. The community of ideas between Germany and Italy, Signor Mussolini told an audience of more than 600,000 people in Berlin on the 28th September, had 'found expression in the struggle against Bolshevism'. Fascism had 'fought with the utmost energy this form of human degeneracy', and it was in order 'to save European culture' from Bolshevism that 'thousands of Italian Fascist volunteers' had fallen in Spain. At the same time, the manner in which the German and Italian Press referred to the Anglo-French proposal for tripartite conversations—which was generally described as an attempt to separate Italy from Germany on an issue over which the two Powers were

¹ The motive of these Latin-American states was apparently their resentment at the attitude of the Spanish Republican Government on the question of refugees in Embassies and Legations (see section (iii), pp. 388-90, below).

² See vol. i, pp. 333-5.

in perfect agreement¹—indicated that if Signor Mussolini had ever had any real intention of following up the first step which his representative had taken at Geneva, he had changed his mind as a result of his consultation with Herr Hitler. At an interview between the Italian Ambassador and Mr. Eden on the 30th September, Count Grandi was indeed reported to have made it plain that Italy was not in favour of three-Power conversations and considered that the question of volunteers ought to be left to the Non-Intervention Committee.

The French and British Governments decided nevertheless not to abandon the idea of tripartite discussions without a final attempt to persuade Italy to modify her attitude. On the 2nd October a joint Anglo-French note was presented in Rome inviting the Italian Government to examine with Great Britain and France 'in a spirit of perfect frankness the situation arising from the prolongation of the Spanish conflict'.

The note pointed out that the difficulties which the London Committee had encountered in connexion with the withdrawal of volunteers had 'practically paralysed its action', and expressed the opinion that 'a previous agreement between the three Powers' was 'necessary to overcome these obstacles'. As an inducement to Italy to accept their invitation to enter into 'frank and cordial conversations', the two Governments mentioned on the one hand the difficulty which they would themselves experience in abiding by the obligations which they had undertaken unless some steps were taken 'to make the policy of non-intervention really effective', and on the other hand held out the hope that when once an agreement on the withdrawal of volunteers had been reached, 'the question of [granting] belligerent rights to the two parties should be capable of solution'.

Although it was practically a foregone conclusion that this invitation would be refused, it was not until the 10th October that the Italian Government informed the French and British Governments that in their opinion a discussion of the situation in Spain which was carried on in the absence of other states who were directly interested²

¹ Signor Gayda, for instance, poured scorn on 'new diplomatic combinations, which, in the guise of conversations or conferences, clothe an apparent attempt to associate Italy with England and France at the eleventh hour, thus separating her from Germany on the problems of Spain and the Mediterranean'.

² The Italian Government also pointed out that no agreement on the withdrawal of volunteers could lead to practical results without the adherence of the two parties in Spain, and in this connexion they referred to the speech of a Spanish representative at the Assembly at Geneva which, they declared, 'excluded . . . any possibility of the evacuation of the volunteers enrolled in

'would lack the elements indispensable for reaching an agreement', and that it was therefore preferable that 'the question of non-intervention should continue to be dealt with at the London Committee'. They also took the opportunity to declare categorically that they would not 'participate in conversations, meetings or conferences to which the German Government' had 'not been formally invited and in which they' did 'not participate'.

The first inclination of the French Government on receipt of this note was apparently to take a strong line and announce the abandonment of the policy of non-intervention and the opening of the Franco-Spanish frontier. The pressure upon them to take this course had not been diminished by rumours of further Italian activities which had been in circulation during the interval between Signor Bova-Scoppa's interview with Monsieur Delbos and the receipt of the Italian note of the 10th October—rumours which (if there was any truth in them at all) cancelled any value that might otherwise have been attached to the assurance which the French and British Governments had received from Italy on the 22nd September. There were reports not only of the landing of additional Italian volunteers on the mainland,¹ but of preparations in Majorca for an expedition to capture Minorca (the last of the Balearic Islands to remain under Republican control). According to information which reached Paris at the end of the first week of October, some 20,000 or 30,000 Italian troops were being assembled in Majorca, together with a strong force of bombing aircraft, in preparation for a raid on Minorca. These rumours were taken very seriously in France, for the reasons that Minorca was even closer than Majorca to the principal lines of communication between France and her North African colonies, and that the island possessed in Port Mahon the only harbour in the Balearic group capable of being developed into a formidable naval base.² The

the armed forces of his Government'. This reference was to a remark made by Señor de Azcárate during the debate on the 2nd October, when he described the International Brigades as 'an organism . . . an entity . . . absolutely Spanish, . . . absolutely under the authority of the Government of the Republic'. The Spanish Government did their best to dispel the idea that Señor de Azcárate's words meant that they had retracted their previous assent in principle to the proposal for the withdrawal of foreign nationals serving on either side, and they informed the British Government that their already declared willingness to part with foreign volunteers did apply to members of the International Brigades.

¹ For instance, *The Manchester Guardian*, in its issue of the 9th October, gave publicity to reports that 15,000 Italian troops had disembarked at Spanish harbours during the past three weeks. It was alleged that these reinforcements brought the total of the Italian forces in Spain up to 110,000.

² See also p. 185, above.

agitation over this question was not quieted by the terms of the Italian note, which merely declared that the Italian Government did not 'need to recall the assurances furnished on repeated occasions, in the most solemn fashion, regarding the political independence and consequently the territorial integrity of Spain, its mainland, its islands, and its colonies'. (It was also remarked in Paris that the Italian note, while it referred at some length to the declarations which the Italian Government had made at intervals of their readiness to consider the question of withdrawing volunteers, did not repeat the assurances which had been given on the 22nd September that no more Italian volunteers would be sent to Spain.) As in the case of the reports of German activity in Morocco which had caused so much anxiety in France at the turn of the years 1936 and 1937,¹ the rumours of Italian preparations in Majorca turned out on further investigation to be greatly exaggerated,² and the anticipated attack on Minorca did not take place—whether because such an attack had in fact not been planned or because it had been forestalled by French publicity. In regard to Italian volunteers, also, the information which became available during the second half of October was of a more reassuring kind; and it began to look as though Signor Mussolini, instead of increasing his assistance to General Franco, was being forced to the conclusion that it was not practicable, in the circumstances in which he now found himself,³ to maintain it at its existing

¹ See pp. 281–3, above.

² A statement which was issued by the Spanish Nationalists in the middle of October declared that the control of the Balearic Islands was in the hands of purely Spanish elements and that Spanish sovereignty constituted no danger to any other nation. At the end of October, foreign journalists who had been allowed to visit Majorca testified that this claim was not unjustified, they reported that they had seen a certain number of German and Italian air pilots and technicians but that there appeared to be no foreign infantry, and that the administration of the island was being conducted by Spaniards.

³ The factors in the situation included financial considerations, the increasing tension between the Spanish Nationalists and their Italian allies; the hope that, after the Nationalists' victory in their northern campaign, the end could not now be far off; and—last but not least—the position in Abyssinia. An official *communiqué* issued in Rome on the 14th October admitted that 'strong groups of bandits' were giving trouble to the Italian army of occupation in Abyssinia; and from reports from non-Italian sources it appeared that the Abyssinian resistance had recently stiffened, and that the Italians were also struggling against serious economic difficulties in their attempt to exploit the country.

It should also be noted that Signor Mussolini had recently decided (the decision caused no less uneasiness to other Powers because the motives for it were not clearly understood) that it was necessary to reinforce the Italian troops in Libya. In the middle of October large detachments of troops were leaving Italy almost every day for Libyan ports.

level. On the 18th October it was semi-officially announced in Rome, in reply to reports which were being published abroad giving the total of the Italian forces in Spain as 100,000 or more, that the correct total was 40,000, and a few days later the Italian diplomatic representatives in London and Paris were instructed to convey this information officially to the Governments to which they were accredited. At the same time, reports were coming in to the effect that Italian infantry was being withdrawn from the fighting line and even from Spanish territory altogether, and if this process continued it appeared that the Italian Government's official figure might before long come to represent something approaching the truth.

Meanwhile, the French Government, after communicating with the British Government, had decided to postpone once again the decision regarding the opening of the Franco-Spanish frontier and to accept the Italian Government's proposal that the problem of the withdrawal of the volunteers should be referred back to the Non-Intervention Committee. In the Anglo-French diplomatic conversations which preceded and followed the Italian Government's formal refusal to take part in three-Power conversations, the French Government were reported to have urged at first that a definite and brief time-limit—say of a week—should be fixed for the negotiations on the withdrawal of volunteers, on the expiry of which period the Spanish frontier would be opened; but they yielded to British representations that it was not advisable to tie the hands of the Non-Intervention Committee by fixing a date beyond which their efforts to come to an agreement might not be pursued. In the event, although the negotiations dragged on for considerably more than a week, the French Government showed themselves in no hurry to carry out their threat of opening the frontier—partly, no doubt, because they lacked the assurance of definite British support for so decisive a step, and partly because the relaxation of Italy's efforts in Spain made the taking of counter-measures by France appear to be a matter of less urgency.¹ Both the French and the

¹ The 'Fascist' Powers no doubt considered that the true explanation of the French Government's abstention from carrying out their threat was that the Franco-Spanish frontier was already open in practice, so that a formal declaration of the removal of restrictions upon traffic with Spain would make little difference. Germany and Italy had always professed to believe that France was no more scrupulous than they were themselves in the matter of evading the obligations of non-intervention (see also p. 326, above, footnote), and they had more scope for accusations of this kind after the suspension of the international control over the Franco-Spanish frontier. In the middle of November, for instance, the Italian Press published a report that 5,000 Russian and Czech volunteers had entered Spain through France

British Government, however, were at pains to make it clear that, while they were willing to refer the question of withdrawal of volunteers back to the London Committee, they were not prepared to look on complacently at the further exercise by the 'Fascist' Powers of the tactics which they had employed with so much success in the past. On the 15th October Mr. Eden told an audience at Llandudno¹ that, while the Government regretted Italy's refusal to take part in tripartite conversations because of their experience of the difficulty of making progress in the Non-Intervention Committee, they had not wished 'a breakdown to come, if come it must, upon an issue of procedure', but that their agreement to hand the question back to the Non-Intervention Committee did not mean that they were 'prepared to acquiesce in dilatory tactics'. In the existing conditions of 'proclaimed intervention, the glorification of breaches of agreement', the patience of those who had 'striven to keep their responsibilities towards Europe constantly before them' was 'well-nigh exhausted', and, in Mr. Eden's view, a 'nation which, if such conditions continue, felt compelled to resume its freedom of action' would not be open to criticism.

This firm language from the lips of the British Foreign Secretary was the prelude to the renewal of the activities of the Non-Intervention Committee, which had now been completely suspended for more than six weeks. It had been decided that the best hope of success lay in a preliminary discussion of the questions at issue by the Chairman's Sub-Committee, which was a less unwieldy body than the full Committee, and on which all the states whose attitude would be of decisive importance were represented. Accordingly, a meeting of the sub-committee had been summoned for the 16th October. Between that date and the 2nd November there were in all seven meetings of the Chairman's Sub-Committee, at four of which Mr. Eden took the chair in the place of Lord Plymouth.

At the meeting of the sub-committee on the 16th October, the French representative, Monsieur Corbin, declared that his Govern-

at the end of October. The German and Italian Press also declared that large quantities of war material were continuing to find their way from France to Spain by sea.

Whatever might be the truth about those alleged French supplies, it appeared that cargoes of munitions were not reaching Spain from Russia during the autumn of 1937 on anything like the scale that had been attained earlier in the year. A falling-off in Russian assistance probably helped to account for the pressure upon the French Government, from their own 'Left' supporters as well as from the Spanish Republicans, to put an end to restrictions on traffic across the Franco-Spanish frontier.

¹ See also p. 165, above.

ment could not allow the present situation to continue, and that they would 'consider themselves entitled to reserve their full liberty of action' if the Committee did not come to an agreement at the earliest possible moment. With the approval of the British Government he asked the members of the sub-committee to adopt a programme of action which he outlined to them. This French plan did not differ greatly in substance from the British proposals of the 14th July;¹ in particular, it incorporated the principle, which Russia had refused to accept, of the interdependence of the withdrawal of volunteers and the recognition of belligerent rights. The new points in Monsieur Corbin's suggestions were that Governments should be asked to renew their formal pledge not to despatch volunteers and aircraft to Spain; that there should be an immediate 'token' withdrawal of a certain number of volunteers, and that the international commissions which were to supervise the withdrawal of volunteers should be nominated as the authority which would decide at what stage belligerent rights could be granted. The only one of these points that was ultimately adopted was the first—on the principle, presumably, that an additional pledge by Governments to observe the undertakings into which they had already entered could do no harm even if it was unlikely to do much good. The suggestion for a 'token' withdrawal of volunteers gave rise to a good deal of discussion, but it was finally dropped owing to the impossibility of reaching agreement as to the basis upon which the numbers to be withdrawn from the two sides should be determined. The suggestion that the international commissions should decide when belligerent rights were to be granted was also dropped.

Indeed, at the second of this series of meetings of the Chairman's Sub-Committee, on the 19th October, Italy and Germany showed a marked preference for going back to the British proposals of the 14th July, instead of discussing Monsieur Corbin's plan; and, since the only object of the French proposals had been to speed up the proceedings, Monsieur Corbin readily agreed to let the 'Fascist' Powers have their way rather than afford them an opportunity for further delays over procedure. The British memorandum of the 14th July therefore formed the basis of discussion at the subsequent meetings of the sub-committee.

From the general exchange of views which took place on the 16th and the 19th October, it appeared that there was still little prospect of breaking the deadlock which had been encountered in July and August. Russia still stood fast in the position that she would not con-

¹ See above, pp. 331 *seqq.*

sider the recognition of belligerency until all foreigners had left Spain, and although Monsieur Maisky did not remain absolutely immovable on this point throughout the negotiations,¹ he did not shift his position sufficiently to come into line with the other Powers. He also introduced a new complication by announcing that his Government, as a proof of their conviction that the policy of non-intervention ought to be abandoned and the Spanish Republican Government's full liberty of action restored, had decided not to make any more contributions towards the expense of keeping the non-intervention system in existence.² The attitude of the 'Fascist' Powers was less obstructive than that of Russia. At the meeting of the Chairman's Sub-Committee on the 20th October Count Grandi announced that Italy was now prepared to agree that international commissions should be sent to the two parties in Spain without delay. The result of their investigations would 'make it possible to decide in what manner and in what proportions' the withdrawal of foreign nationals should take place; and Italy agreed that the decision 'at what moment and in what manner belligerent rights should be recognised' should be postponed until the Non-Intervention Committee had at its disposal the reports of the commissions. This declaration, with which the German representative associated himself, was followed, on the 22nd October, by an explicit statement from Count Grandi that his Government now accepted completely the nine points of the British plan of the 14th July.

At the meetings of the sub-committee during the last week of October, however, difficulties arose because the Italian representative, with the support of his German and Portuguese colleagues, took the line that an acceptance of the proposal for the despatch of commissions to ascertain the numbers of foreigners fighting in Spain was not equivalent to an acceptance, as binding, of the commissions' estimate of the numbers. The general feeling of the sub-committee was that it would be mere waste of time for the Powers to send commissions to Spain without pledging themselves to accept their

¹ At the meeting on the 26th October he conceded the possibility that Russia might consider the recognition of belligerency when the bulk of the foreigners had left Spain, and he made a formal statement regarding this possibility at the meeting of the full Non-Intervention Committee on the 4th November (see p. 372, below).

² Verbal notice of this decision had been given at the beginning of October, and it was formally confirmed on the 28th October. At the meeting of the Non-Intervention Committee on the 4th November, however, Monsieur Maisky remarked that 'if a system of control should be established which was regarded by the Soviet Government as being satisfactory, it might then reconsider its present position in so far as payments to the control fund are concerned.'

findings, and Count Grandi finally yielded to pressure on this point. At the meeting on the 29th October the Chairman (Mr. Eden) was able to note general agreement on the principle that the commissions could count on the acceptance of their conclusions by the Powers, provided that they fulfilled their terms of reference.

A more serious obstacle was presented by the question of what line was to be taken in view of the Soviet Government's persistence in their refusal to accept the compromise linking up a withdrawal of volunteers and the granting of belligerent rights. At the meeting on the 20th October it appeared as though Italy and Germany would be content with seeing Russia in the position of a minority of one, and would be willing to agree that the British plan might be put into force with the abstention of Russia—a course which Great Britain and France were also prepared, though reluctantly, to take. Monsieur Maisky, who at first raised objections to this method of overruling his Government, subsequently consented to abstain from voting, instead of casting an adverse vote, on that part of the draft resolution before the sub-committee which related to belligerent rights. He notified the Chairman's Sub-Committee of this decision on the 2nd November.

Meanwhile, at the meeting on the 22nd October, the 'Fascist' Powers had changed their line, and proclaimed that their acceptance of the British plan must be conditional upon its unanimous acceptance by all the members of the Non-Intervention Committee. This new obstacle occupied the sub-committee at three meetings, on the 22nd, 26th and 29th October; but it was finally overcome, after the representatives of the 'Fascist' Powers had consulted their Governments, by their reversion to their earlier attitude that it was possible to proceed with the adoption of the plan without waiting for the full co-operation of Russia—subject to the reservation that, if Russia did not change her mind, it would be necessary to make some new provision to compensate for her refusal to grant belligerent rights (which would, in the opinion of the 'Fascist' Powers, upset the balance of the scheme in favour of the Spanish Government). On the 2nd November, accordingly, the Chairman's Sub-Committee was able to agree upon the text of two resolutions for submission to the full Committee recording the acceptance by all the states members of the sub-committee, save Russia, of all the points in the British plan of the 14th July, 1937, and laying down the programme to be followed in putting the plan into effect.

The first resolution authorized the Chairman of the Non-Intervention Committee to approach the two parties in Spain immediately

with a view to securing their co-operation in 'the withdrawal, under international supervision, of all persons engaged in the present conflict who are of non-Spanish nationality or who were of non-Spanish nationality at its outbreak in July 1936'. The authorities in Spain were to be asked to agree to the appointment of two commissions—one to be sent to either party—with the duty of estimating and reporting to the Non-Intervention Committee as rapidly as possible the total number of non-Spanish nationals to be withdrawn,concerting arrangements 'with the appropriate Spanish authorities' for their withdrawal, and carrying out the withdrawal 'in the manner determined by the Non-Intervention Committee' and 'in accordance with the proportions of the numbers of non-Spanish nationals serving on each side'. The members of these commissions were to be nominated by the Non-Intervention Committee as soon as possible. The Chairman of the Committee was also to inform the parties in Spain that the Governments represented on the Committee would grant them belligerent rights 'to the extent and on the conditions laid down' in the British plan.¹

The first resolution also provided that 'as from a date to be determined by the Non-Intervention Committee and which should shortly precede the commencement of the withdrawal of non-Spanish nationals from Spain' the system of observation on the land frontiers of Spain should be 'restored and strengthened, simultaneously with the adoption of measures to strengthen the Sea Observation Scheme'. In the concluding paragraph the Governments were invited to reaffirm their existing engagements not to permit the despatch from or transit through their territories of war material or 'volunteers' destined for Spain.

In the second resolution, the Chairman was authorized, when approaching the two parties in Spain, 'to make clear to them the attitude and intentions of the various Governments in regard to the several parts of the resolution'; and the Chairman's Sub-Committee was asked to continue to examine 'the concrete questions arising out of the execution of the several parts of the resolution' and, in addition, to undertake an examination 'of the question of what practical measures may be required to meet the situation arising out of the fact that one Government has abstained from accepting the provisions in the resolution relating to belligerent rights'.

These resolutions were adopted on the 4th November by the full Non-Intervention Committee (which had not met since the 16th

¹ Provision was made for the appointment of a technical sub-committee to advise upon all questions arising in this connexion.

July, 1937), after the representatives of the principal Powers had made statements setting forth their Governments' views. The most important of these declarations, from the point of view of the prospects for putting the British plan into force, were those of Count Grandi and Monsieur Maisky

It must be clearly understood [said Count Grandi] that the acceptance of the British plan by the Italian Government has been, and still remains, conditional to the unreserved acceptance by all the twenty-seven member states of the British plan itself. The Italian Government do not feel themselves bound by the provisions relating to the evacuation of volunteers if there is any doubt on the unanimous acceptance and the unanimous commitments of the other Governments in respect of the recognition of belligerent rights and the reconstruction of a control system. Therefore the Committee is not in a position to give execution to the British plan until (1) either Soviet Russia recedes from her attitude and accepts, as all the other Powers do, the nine inter-dependent points of the British plan, (2) or the Powers agree, in accordance with paragraph (b) of the second resolution . . . on the measures to be adopted for facing the serious consequences of the Soviet abstention.

As for Monsieur Maisky, he defended once again his Government's standpoint on belligerent rights, but he indicated that there was a possibility that they might modify their attitude if they were convinced that the other provisions of the British plan were being carried out in good faith.

If and when the Soviet Government is satisfied that the bulk of non-Spanish nationals has actually been withdrawn, that new reinforcements for the rebels have ceased to arrive and that there can therefore be detected on the part of the respective Governments a sincere desire to stop interference in Spanish affairs, then it might perhaps consent to consider the question of granting belligerent rights even before a 100 per cent. evacuation has taken place. But, of course, the Soviet Government must reserve the right to decide whether the necessary pre-requisites do exist for such a step.

This declaration by Monsieur Maisky (which reproduced a statement that he had made to the sub-committee on the 26th October)¹ marked the first definite step in his Government's retreat from the position on which they had taken their stand in the middle of July;² and during the next fortnight the Soviet Government apparently came to the conclusion that there was nothing to be gained by

¹ See p. 369, above.

² The Soviet Government had modified their original attitude (which was that they would never recognize General Franco's belligerent status) at an early stage (see pp. 336-7, above), but Monsieur Maisky's statements of the 26th October and 4th November were the first departure from their hitherto rigid refusal to consider recognition of belligerency until all foreign nationals had left Spain.

attempting to hold this particular fort any longer. At a meeting of the Chairman's Sub-Committee on the 16th November Monsieur Maisky was able to announce that his Government had now decided to accept in principle the provision in the British plan regarding the grant of belligerent rights. At the same time, he made it clear that the Soviet Government's withdrawal was only strategic, and that they intended to make another stand when the question of the exact stage at which belligerency was to be recognized came up for decision. The Soviet Government, he said, now accepted

the resolution of the 4th November *in toto* without any reservations whatsoever, leaving, along with the other Governments, its interpretation of the term 'substantial withdrawal' until the time when this question will come up for consideration in the Committee.

This Russian *volte face* restored the unanimity of the Non-Intervention Committee, and thus fulfilled one of the alternative conditions which the 'Fascist' Powers had insisted upon as essential to any progress towards the application of the British plan. By the 1st December another necessary preliminary had been completed, and the adherence in principle of the two parties in Spain had been obtained.

In accordance with the terms of the first resolution of the 4th November, Lord Plymouth had invited the Spanish Government and the Nationalist régime at Salamanca to inform him without delay whether they were prepared to co-operate, in the manner indicated in the resolution, in the withdrawal of volunteers. Judging from the replies which had been elicited by previous inquiries from the two parties in Spain, the Nationalist régime was more likely than the Government to raise difficulties, but the British Government had some reason to hope that General Franco's attitude might be influenced by the arrangements which were just on the point of conclusion for the appointment of agents to represent the Spanish Nationalists in Great Britain and the British Government in the territory under General Franco's control¹

¹ See pp. 176-7, above. The British Government strenuously denied that it was possible to read into an act which they regarded as purely a matter of expediency the implication that Great Britain might be expected shortly to follow the example of the countries which had recognized General Franco's régime as the Government of Spain.

General Franco had so far received *de jure* recognition only from Italy, Germany and Albania and from a few Latin-American countries (see p. 256, above). On the 1st December, however, the Japanese Government accorded it to him, as a sequel to the adherence of Italy to the anti-Comintern Pact (see vol. i, pp. 43 *seqq.*) and in return for General Franco's recognition of 'Manchukuo'. Portugal, contrary to expectation, refrained from following up her breach with

The British Government's willingness to come to terms on the question of mutual representation did undoubtedly give great satisfaction to the Nationalists, and probably inclined General Franco to return a more favourable reply than he might otherwise have made to the communication which he received from Lord Plymouth after the meeting of the Non-Intervention Committee on the 4th November. At all events, his answer, which was conveyed to the British Embassy at Hendaye on the 20th November, was an acceptance in principle of the proposal for the despatch of an international commission to Nationalist Spain, subject to certain reservations regarding the terms of reference and composition of the commission and to a request for the elucidation of certain points. General Franco also suggested that the recognition of belligerent rights might take place when 3,000 foreign nationals had been withdrawn from either side—an interpretation of 'substantial progress' in withdrawal which might seem unlikely to be accepted by the Soviet Government.

The reply of the Republican Government, which was received in London on the 1st December, also accepted the proposal that the withdrawal of volunteers should be supervised by international commissions, but they, too, asked for further light on certain points (such as the scope of the system of control which was to be re-established, and the method by which volunteers were to be selected for withdrawal), and they also inquired whether their definitive acceptance of the plan would involve recognition of the Nationalists' belligerent rights.

It was plain that, while the acceptance in principle of the British plan by the Non-Intervention Committee on the 4th November (completed, as it now was, by the adherence of Russia and of the two contending parties in Spain) marked a definite advance, it was by no means equivalent to a final solution of that problem of making non-intervention really effective which had been under consideration for so many months. It was by no means certain that the 'Fascist' Powers had genuinely abandoned their opposition to the withdrawal

the Spanish Republican Government (see p. 256, above) by recognizing the Nationalist régime; but in December 1937 she followed the example of Great Britain and appointed an agent to represent her in Nationalist Spain. A similar step had already been taken by Austria, Hungary and Switzerland. France did not follow suit to Great Britain, though she had raised no objection to the British action (in regard to which she had been consulted before the negotiations were concluded). Relations between the Spanish Nationalists and the French Government had not been improved by an incident which had occurred in the third week of September, when an attempt by Spanish Nationalists to seize a Spanish submarine at Brest had been followed by the arrest at Hendaye of the Spanish Military Governor of Irún, Colonel Troncoso.

of their nationals from Spain; and, even if their sincerity had not been open to question, the terms in which Russia and the two Spanish parties had signified their approval of the resolution of the 4th November showed that there were still many obstacles to be overcome before principle could be translated into practice.

While the answers from Spain were being awaited, detailed plans for restoring and strengthening the system of control, for withdrawing volunteers, and for granting belligerent rights were being worked out by technical sub-committees, and this process continued throughout December. A meeting of the Chairman's Sub-Committee on the 7th December took note of the replies from the two parties in Spain, and agreed that it would now be possible to take more definite steps towards the organization of the commissions which were to be sent to Spain. The question of the mandate to be given to the commissions had already been discussed informally by the Secretary of the Committee with the representatives of the principal Governments concerned; further progress was made at another meeting of the sub-committee on the 9th December; and on the 22nd December the members of the sub-committee were able to record their agreement on the terms of reference of the commissions. The question of the composition of the commissions had still not been settled, however, and while considerable progress had been made by the technical sub-committees in the execution of their task, there was no immediate prospect of agreement on the more controversial aspects of the plan as a whole—for instance, on the question of what interpretation, in actual figures, was to be given to the term 'substantial progress' in the withdrawal of volunteers. While the crucial question of determining the stage at which belligerent rights were to be granted thus remained for further negotiation, the sub-committee decided on the 22nd December that the technical preparations for putting the British plan into effect had advanced sufficiently far to justify a further step; and the Secretary of the International Board was authorized, from the 1st January, 1938, to incur expenditure not exceeding £5,000 in order to make a beginning with an investigation of the administrative problems involved in the plan for withdrawing volunteers—in the hope that this preliminary exploration might make it possible to reduce the period which must in any case elapse between the date of the final adoption of the plan by the Non-Intervention Committee and the date on which it could be put into force.

This was the situation at the turn of the years 1937–8 in regard to the application of the British plan for withdrawing foreign nationals.

from Spain and granting the combatants limited belligerent rights. The next phase of the long-drawn-out negotiations must be reserved for treatment in a subsequent volume.

(iii) The Powers and Humanitarian Activities in Spain

Before the development of air warfare, it was generally taken for granted that a war in which the citizens of a single state were divided against themselves would be fought out with even greater savagery than was to be expected in an international war, but this distinction hardly held good under modern conditions, when any war was likely to be waged with the ferocity that was traditionally associated with civil war. In the case of the war in Spain which began in July 1936, the passions aroused were not any the less intense because the ideological differences which divided the contending parties were not national but international in character. The conflict did indeed display the worst features of a civil war,¹ although that description could hardly be applied with accuracy to a struggle in which the forces engaged and the interests at stake were so far from being exclusively national. Even if some of the atrocities committed might perhaps be attributable to a special element of ruthlessness in the Spanish character, the responsibility for the disregard of humanitarian considerations in the conduct of the war could not be said to rest solely upon Spanish shoulders. For such actions as the mass execution of political opponents or the holding of women and children as hostages Spaniards might be chiefly or entirely responsible, but they could not be blamed, for instance, for the fact that bombing from the air was regarded in the years 1936 and 1937 as a legitimate method of warfare. The failure of the attempts which had been made at Geneva during the years 1927 to 1934, in connexion with the efforts to conclude a general treaty on the reduction or limitation of armaments, to reach agreement for the abolition of air warfare had made it virtually certain that in any future conflict there would be no clear-cut distinction between combatants and non-combatants, military objectives and centres of civil population, and for that failure Spain and the Spaniards could not be held responsible.² More-

¹ See pp. 80 *seqq.*, above.

² A considerable share of responsibility for the failure to abolish air warfare rested upon the British Government, whose reluctance to give up the right to use bombing for police purposes in outlying territories had been one of the obstacles in the way of an agreement on this question (see the *Survey for 1933*, pp. 259, 285-6). It could be argued, of course, that if an agreement to prohibit bombing from the air, or even for the abolition of all military aircraft, had

over, foreign Powers who supplied both aeroplanes and pilots to one or other of the parties to the Spanish civil war, in defiance of their own undertakings, could not be acquitted of all blame for the sufferings of the civil population, quite apart from the question whether the foreign pilots who carried out particular air raids, such as those on Guernica and other Basque towns in April 1937,¹ were acting on their own initiative or on the instructions of superior officers of their own nationality, or were carrying out Spanish orders.

It is improbable, however, that it was any sense of sharing in the moral responsibility for certain aspects of the war in Spain which made foreign Powers feel that it was incumbent upon them not only to do what was possible, by way of protest and appeal, to secure greater regard for humanitarian principles on the part of the Spanish belligerents, but also to make contributions of their own towards the alleviation of the hardships arising out of the war. This intervention for humanitarian purposes was not considered to be incompatible with the principle of non-intervention in the internal affairs of Spain on which the attitude of the European states towards the Spanish war was nominally based, and indeed the Governments which were the principal supporters of the policy of non-intervention were also to the fore in such matters as interceding for political prisoners and arranging for the evacuation and maintenance of refugees.

His Majesty's Government [the Prime Minister of Great Britain told the House of Commons on the 24th March, 1938] in a spirit of complete impartiality have devoted their efforts to such humanitarian work as has been possible for the benefit of the Spanish people as a whole. They have greatly deplored the excesses committed during this strife as affecting the civilian population, and they have taken every opportunity which presented itself to convey to both sides their strong disapproval of the employment of such methods, which have earned public condemnation and are contrary to the rules of international law.

The first attempt on the part of the Powers to 'humanize' the Spanish conflict was made on a collective basis when the war had been in progress for about a month. The initiative was taken by the Argentinian Ambassador to Spain, Don Daniel Garcia Mansilla, who was the doyen of the diplomatic corps accredited to the Spanish Government, which had by that time established its headquarters at Hendaye. Señor Mansilla had himself been unable for some weeks been concluded, the ease with which commercial aircraft could be adapted for military purposes would still have made it possible, if not probable, that some Power might disregard its pledges in time of war—in the same way as the Italian Government had ignored in the Abyssinian campaign their treaty obligation not to use poisonous gases (see the *Survey for 1935*, vol. ii, pp. 327 and 413–14).

¹ See pp. 68 seqq., above.

to leave his summer residence near San Sebastián, where he had been at the outbreak of the war, because the Spanish Republican authorities had refused to recognize his right to grant asylum to, and see safely out of Spain, five of his guests who were Spaniards of anti-Republican sympathies.¹ The Spanish Government had finally consented to give the Argentinian Ambassador's visitors a safe conduct to the frontier, and he and they reached French territory in the middle of August; but this experience probably helped to convince him of the urgent need of appealing to either contending party in Spain to spare the lives of adherents of the other party who fell into their hands and generally to mitigate the sufferings of the civilian population. Señor Mansilla's colleagues at Hendaye, and the Governments which they represented, shared his view that no time should be lost in making representations in this sense. In the words of the British Foreign Secretary,² 'the internal politics of Spain' were 'the concern of the people of Spain', but 'the mitigation of suffering' was a matter of general concern. 'The apparent refusal to take prisoners and the consequent mass execution' by either party in Spain of opponents who were captured or who surrendered, 'the reprisals for such acts, and the increasing barbarities to which the reprisals' would 'inevitably lead', were 'matters to which civilized states' could not 'be indifferent'.

On the 21st August, 1936, the Heads of Missions of nine countries (Argentina, Belgium, Czechoslovakia, Finland, France, Great Britain, Italy, the Netherlands and Sweden)³ agreed to offer their intercession for the purpose of humanizing the war as far as possible. They authorized Señor Mansilla to approach the Spanish Republican Government in the first place and to ask them if they would agree, without prejudice to their authority, to a similar approach being made to General Franco. The object of these *démarches* was defined as follows.⁴

The idea of the Heads of Diplomatic Missions has been to protect the civil population from suffering, which consists notably in the imprison-

¹ For the question of refugees in Embassies and Legations, which was the subject of prolonged negotiations between a number of Governments and the Spanish Republican authorities see pp. 388-90, below.

² In a telegram to the British Ambassador at Hendaye expressing approval of the proposed appeal to the contending forces. Mr. Eden added that H.M. Government had already had a proposal of this kind in mind, and had taken some preliminary steps in the matter, when they received the news of the proposed joint *démarche*.

³ The Heads of Missions of the United States and Japan were also at Hendaye, but they abstained from taking part in the joint appeal.

⁴ In a statement issued by the Argentinian Embassy at Hendaye on the 31st August, 1936.

ment of hostages and other non-combatants, in the danger to public health caused by lack of medicines, water and light, and in the loss of human life resulting from the bombardment of undefended towns. They also desire measures to be taken to preserve the monuments and works of art which reflect the grandeur and the glories of the past.

It was expressly stated that in making this appeal the members of the diplomatic corps at Hendaye had 'no diplomatic or military *arrière-pensée*' ; but it would have been strange if the idea had never entered their heads that a successful attempt to mediate between the contending parties for such humanitarian purposes as the exchange of prisoners might well open the way to mediation for a settlement of the conflict—an offer which had already been under consideration by certain Latin-American Governments.¹ The outcome of the humanitarian appeal was not, however, successful enough to afford an opening for further international action of a more far-reaching kind. The international committee at Hendaye did apparently succeed in arranging two meetings, on the 28th and 29th August, which were attended by representatives both of the Madrid Government and of the Nationalist Junta, and at which the question of exchanging the political prisoners held by either side was discussed, but in the first week of September there was a change of Government at Madrid,² and the new Government refused to renew the mandate of the representatives whom their predecessors had appointed to take part in the discussions at Hendaye. This attitude created a deadlock which the diplomats were unable to break, and they were obliged to abandon their hope of bringing the two parties to an agreement on humanitarian questions. At the beginning of September reports were in circulation that poison gas had been, or was about to be, used ; and the question then arose whether the diplomatic corps at Hendaye should make concerted inquiries into the truth of these reports and concerted representations to the two parties against the use of gas, even in retaliation ; or whether the various Governments should be left, if they thought fit, to make separate representations. The alternative of collective action was ruled out—apparently on the initiative of the Italian representative, who declared that the refusal of the Spanish Government to co-operate with the diplomatic corps in their efforts to 'humanize' the war made a joint approach to that Government useless ; but such inquiries as were made by individual Governments seem to have satisfied them that poisonous gases were not in fact being used by either side.³

¹ See pp. 271-2, above.

² See p. 97, above.

³ The Spanish Government were said to have admitted the possession, but not the use, of a certain quantity of tear gas. Rumours that gas was being

The result of this first attempt by the Powers to obtain greater regard for humanitarian principles in the conduct of the war was not such as to encourage further collective action in this field; and in fact nearly nine months elapsed before the Powers made another joint appeal to the parties in Spain to mitigate the sufferings of the civilian population. The agency this time was the Non-Intervention Committee in London; the initiative in the matter was taken by the British Government, and the immediate motive was supplied by the bombing of Guernica and other Basque towns and villages in April 1937.¹ As Mr. Eden told the House of Commons on the 30th April, His Majesty's Government deeply deplored 'the bombardment of the civilian population in Spain wherever it' might 'occur and whoever' might 'be responsible', and they had been 'anxiously considering what action could be taken to prevent the recurrence of such deplorable events'.² The result of these deliberations was that Lord Plymouth suggested at a meeting of the Chairman's Sub-Committee of the Non-Intervention Committee on the 4th May that the Committee should address an appeal to both parties in Spain calling upon them to abandon the practice of bombing open towns. In the course of the discussion on this proposal the representatives of the 'Fascist' Powers (who might well feel a certain awkwardness in associating themselves with such an appeal, in view of the part which German aeroplanes had played in the recent air raids over the Basque country) strongly advocated that the *démarche* should be made on a wider basis—that is, that the combatants should be asked in more general terms to conduct their hostilities with the greatest possible regard for humanitarian considerations. This alternative was finally adopted, though not without reluctance on the part of certain delegates,

or was going to be, used, by one side or the other, continued to be circulated from time to time, but no concrete evidence of gas warfare appears to have been forthcoming. Early in April 1937 the British Government were moved by the reports which were being published in the Press to make formal inquiries on the subject from both sides—pointing out the extent to which any use of chemical weapons would damage in the eyes of the world the reputation of the party which adopted them. The reply from Burgos was to the effect that the Nationalists had not used poison gas and had no intention of using it, while the Spanish Government assured the British Government that they had never contemplated taking the initiative in the use of chemical bombs.

¹ See pp. 68 *segg.*, above.

² Mr. Eden also stated on this occasion that the British Ambassador at Hendaye had been instructed 'to report urgently' whether there was any foundation for believing that the Nationalists intended to carry out a threat recently uttered by General Mola, the Nationalist Commander on the Basque front, that Bilbao would be razed to the ground if the Basque resistance was maintained.

including the Russian representative, who took the view that the more restricted appeal would have been more likely to achieve the desired result. The normally slow pace at which the machinery of the Non-Intervention Committee moved was retarded still further on this occasion by the *Deutschland* incident and its sequel,¹ and it was not until the 18th June (in the brief interval between the settlement of the *Deutschland* crisis and the fresh crisis over the *Leipzig* incident) that the Non-Intervention Committee approved of the presentation to both parties in Spain by the British Government of the following appeal.

Deeply impressed by the sufferings inflicted upon the people of Spain by the tragic events which have marked the present conflict, and actuated by the desire to bring relief to the families and homes of the Spanish people, the International Committee for the Application of the Agreement regarding Non-Intervention in Spain, on behalf of the Governments [the names of the twenty-seven Governments were set out] which are parties to the Non-Intervention Agreement, appeal to the two parties in Spain at once to take every step necessary for the protection of non-combatants, whether men, women, or children, from the dangers to which they are subject, and to put a stop to the summary or mass executions of individuals for political reasons.

The International Committee urge that hostages and prisoners of war held by either party should be treated in accordance with humanitarian principles, that for the future the system of hostages should be abandoned, and that all non-Spanish nationals held as prisoners who have taken no part in the present conflict should be released. These principles should be applied equally to the civilian adherents of the opposite side in the territory under the control of the respective parties.

Lastly, the International Committee urge that both sides should abstain from the destruction of all open towns and villages and other objectives of a non-military character, whether by bombardment from the air, or by land or sea, or by fire, mining, or by any other means.

The International Committee for Non-Intervention in Spain earnestly hope that the present appeal, which they believe corresponds with the ideals and the honourable traditions which have ever animated the Spanish people in the course of its history, will evoke a response from the two parties and will help to lessen the cruel sufferings inflicted upon the civil population during the present conflict.

While this appeal by the Non-Intervention Committee was still under consideration, the Council of the League, at a meeting on the 29th May, 1937, had passed a resolution² condemning the use of methods of warfare which were contrary to international law, in particular the bombing of open towns, and commending the efforts which were being made to save the civilians who were exposed to 'these terrible dangers'.

¹ See pp. 311 *seqq.*, above.

² See also p. 304, above.

The representations of the League Council and of the Non-Intervention Committee appear to have produced little or no result, at any rate so far as the effects of air warfare on the civilian population were concerned. The bombing of towns behind the Republican front line was intensified rather than diminished during the second six months of 1937; and though further protests against this practice were made from time to time by individual Governments (for instance by the French and British Governments and also by the Pope on the occasion of the bombing of Barcelona in March 1938), these generally elicited from the Nationalists¹ the reply that the towns in question contained military objectives such as troop concentrations or munition factories and therefore could not be considered 'open towns'.

If the Governments were not able to achieve very much in the mitigation of suffering in Spain by means of appeals or protests to the authorities on either side, there was still scope for individual or collective efforts in the actual carrying out of relief work, and in this field it could be claimed that the lot of the civilian population would have been even harder than it actually was if it had not been for foreign assistance. This humanitarian work was carried on both by international organizations such as the Red Cross and the Save the Children International Union and by private charitable organizations in various countries, and a number of Governments were also directly concerned in such matters as the transport and accommodation of refugees.

In September 1936 the International Committee of the Red Cross negotiated an agreement by which both parties in Spain undertook to permit Red Cross agents in Madrid and Burgos and other towns on either side of the shifting line which divided Nationalist from Republican Spain to carry on relief work among prisoners and negotiate for their exchange, to help to arrange for the evacuation of non-combatants, and to collect particulars regarding war orphans and make provision for their care. By January 1937 Red Cross agents had been established in a number of towns, and they were reported to be working in close co-operation with local officials. Contributions towards the cost of their work had by that time been received from national Red Cross Societies in thirty-five different countries. Medical supplies were despatched to both sides by the International Red Cross Committee, and some of the national societies also sent medical

¹ The response of the Republican Government to such representations was more satisfactory; and in respect of air bombing at any rate there could be no doubt as to which side betrayed the greater degree of atrociousness.

and nursing personnel to the front, though their activities in this field received less publicity than those of various other organizations.¹

In December 1936 the British Government (partly as a result of representations made by a delegation of Members of Parliament who had visited Republican Spain in the previous month)² suggested that the organization of relief work in Spain should be entrusted to the International Relief Union. This proposal was not accepted at that time by the Spanish Government, who did not, however, feel any objection to receiving help from the technical organizations of the League of Nations. At the meeting of the League Council in December 1936³ the need for international action to relieve the sufferings of non-combatants in Spain was emphasized by several speakers, and the resolution which was adopted⁴ noted that there were 'problems in regard to which co-ordinated action of an international and humanitarian character' was 'desirable as soon as possible', and authorized the Secretary-General, if a suitable opportunity should occur, to make available the assistance of the technical organizations of the League. The Spanish Government took advantage of this offer without delay, and on their invitation a medical mission went from Geneva to Madrid at the end of December to investigate the conditions in Republican Spain, with a view especially to the danger of epidemics. This mission, whose report was circulated on the 21st January, 1937, took on the whole a favourable view of the situation in regard to the health of the civil population. They found that there was little immediate danger of serious epidemics or of food shortage; but they recommended none the less that at least half the civilian population of Madrid ought to be evacuated with the least possible delay.⁵

The relief work which was undertaken by various international and national agencies in Spain could be divided into three main categories: the provision of hospitals, ambulances and medical stores for combatants, and of food and clothing and other necessities of life for the civil population; arrangements for the exchange or release of prisoners and hostages; and the evacuation and accommodation of refugees from the areas in which fighting was taking place.

It was in the organization of medical aid for the combatants in Spain and the provision and distribution of food and clothing for non-combatants that private charity found the greatest scope for its efforts. In Russia, the collection of funds for assistance to the

¹ See also p. 384, below.

² See pp. 262 *seqq.*, above.

³ See also below, p. 391.

² See also p. 391, below.

⁴ See pp. 266-7, above.

Spanish Republicans and the despatch of food and other supplies was organized on at least a semi-official basis (thus giving colour to the accusation of the 'Fascist' Powers that Governments which sympathized with the Spanish Republicans were guilty of 'moral intervention' on their behalf).¹ If the Governments of Italy and Germany incurred a similar charge themselves they did not give the fact publicity, but it could be presumed that any humanitarian assistance which went to Spain from 'Fascist' countries (in the form, for instance, of medical units for service with the forces) was not organized on private initiative. In 'democratic' countries such as Great Britain, France and the United States, however, the organization of relief for Spain was undertaken to a large extent by private associations, some of which were already in existence and others created *ad hoc*. By September 1937 no fewer than twenty-six organizations which were engaged in collecting funds for relief work in Spain had been registered with the State Department at Washington.² In Great Britain organizations such as the National Joint Committee for Spanish Relief and the General Relief Fund for Distressed Women and Children, both of which were formed by the co-operation of a number of bodies, made it their object to give help wherever it was most needed; and if their activities were for the most part conducted on the Republican side of the front, that was because there was a higher degree of human suffering among refugees and those suffering from the effects of blockade and of bombing from the air in Republican Spain than in the territory under Nationalist control. There were also partisan associations in Great Britain (for example, those which were under the auspices of the Labour Party or of the Roman Catholic Church), which devoted themselves to giving humanitarian assistance exclusively to one side or the other. Thus the Spanish Medical Aid Committee, which had despatched forty ambulances to Spain and organized five hospitals by the summer of 1937, proclaimed that its object was to give help to the 'democratic' Spanish forces—although wounded Nationalists as well as supporters of the Government benefited from the medical assistance which was made available in the front line by the Committee's efforts. In France the private organization of humanitarian aid seems to have followed mainly political lines—the Left collecting funds for help to the Republicans, and the Right for help to General

¹ See p. 235, above.

² The obligation upon such organizations to register themselves was imposed by the American neutrality legislation. (For this legislation see vol. i, Part III, section (iv) (b)).

Franco—but in the matter of giving hospitality to refugees¹ no discrimination was shown, though in the nature of the case it was the Spanish Republicans who made the greatest call upon French charity in this respect.

Foreign assistance to Spain in arranging the exchange of prisoners, on the other hand, was conducted principally on an international basis. It has been mentioned² that the position of the political prisoners who were held in considerable numbers by either side in Spain was the problem with which the diplomatic corps at Hendaye was primarily concerned when it made its abortive attempt at the end of August 1936 to bring the two parties together for a discussion of humanitarian questions. The diplomatic representatives of Great Britain and other Powers continued to co-operate in the efforts to arrange exchanges of prisoners which were made, after the breakdown of the Hendaye negotiations, under the auspices of the International Red Cross, and although these activities were carried on under great difficulties they were not completely unsuccessful. In the second week of September 1936, Dr. Junod, the delegate of the International Red Cross Committee, was reported to have secured the Spanish Government's acceptance of the principle of an exchange of prisoners and their consent to his approaching the authorities at Burgos for their approval; but there were many obstacles to be overcome before the principle could be applied in practice, and no prisoners had yet been released by either side when, in the middle of October 1936, the closing in of the Nationalist forces upon Madrid gave rise to concern as to the possible fate of persons who were held in custody in the city on account of their actual or suspected anti-Republican sympathies. There were believed to be some thousands of these prisoners in Madrid—including retired military officers, members of political parties of the Right, priests and aristocrats—and there seemed to be some reason to fear that they might become the victims of reprisals by the Republican militia or that their guards might be unable or unwilling to protect them against violence at the hands of a mob infuriated by the intense air bombardment to which the city was being subjected. In the third week of October the British Ambassador, on his Government's instructions, offered to the Spanish Government and to the Nationalist authorities his good offices in arranging an exchange of hostages and facilities for their transport in British ships in cases where sea transport was required. The British offer elicited from the Spanish Government the reply that they held no hostages but only political prisoners who

¹ See below, pp. 392, 394-5.

² See p. 378, above.

could not be released without danger to the Republican cause.¹ The offer of British good offices in arranging the exchange of political prisoners was also rejected by the Nationalists, though they declared that they were willing to let British officials visit the prisons in which their political opponents were detained, and see for themselves that they were well treated.²

Dr. Junod and members of the diplomatic corps did not relax their efforts to bring about exchanges of prisoners between the Republicans and the Nationalists, but they did not succeed in securing the release of more than a small proportion of the total number of political prisoners. At the end of May 1937 the Nationalists set free forty-five foreign prisoners of war who had been captured when serving in an International Brigade, but in the matter of political prisoners they made as many difficulties as their opponents. After a few minor achievements (such as the exchange at the beginning of June 1937 of a group of Boy Scouts held by the Republicans for a troupe of actors), Dr. Junod did apparently succeed in August 1937 in arranging that a number of Republicans held prisoner in Majorca should be exchanged for a corresponding number of anti-Republicans, and in September an agreement was reported for the exchange of 2,500 persons who had taken refuge in Embassies or Legations in Madrid³ against an equal number of Republicans on the Nationalist side;⁴ but the negotiations upon which Dr. Junod then entered for the exchange of a much larger number (the figure of 25,000 on either side was mentioned in the Press) do not appear to have produced any result. Just before Christmas, however, Dr. Junod succeeded, with the aid of the British Ambassador, in securing an agreement for an exchange of 200 prisoners from either side, all of whom were under sentence of death.

¹ At the end of November it was reported that nearly 1,000 political prisoners had been removed from Madrid to Valencia. Most of these were said to be ex-officers who were suspected of complicity in the Nationalist revolt.

² Mr. Eden explained in the House of Commons on the 16th November that H.M. Government had refrained from accepting this offer on the part of the Nationalists in order not to infringe the principle of impartiality or to prejudice future efforts to arrange an exchange of political prisoners. In the middle of November it was announced that the British *chargé d'affaires* in Madrid had been authorized to take any practicable steps to ensure the safety of prisoners, and to make further representations to the authorities with this object in view.

³ See p. 390, below.

⁴ According to Press reports, General Franco at first proposed that his quota should be made up of Republicans who were at liberty in Nationalist territory, but the Spanish Government not unnaturally regarded this offer with scepticism, and the Nationalists finally agreed to release persons who were in prison on account of their political views.

The authorities who made the greatest response to Dr Junod's representations were those in Bilbao. The first exchange of prisoners for which the representative of the Red Cross was responsible was that of the Mayor of Bilbao and a Monarchist deputy, which took place at the beginning of October 1936. During that month the Basque authorities released more than 200 women hostages, who were taken to St. Jean de Luz in British ships, and in return a number of children were taken from San Sebastián to Bilbao. (There was a complaint on the Basque side that the Nationalists did not carry out their promise to release women whom they were holding as hostages.) At the end of October 1936 an agreement was reported for the release of non-combatants detained by either side in the province of Guipúzcoa, and at the end of the year negotiations were in train for the exchange of about 4,000 hostages between the Nationalists and the Basques. The Government at Bilbao were willing to release all non-combatants, but difficulties were encountered over the question of releasing prisoners of military age and also over a stipulation on the Basque side that the bombing of open towns should cease if hostages were released. The Nationalist authorities were unwilling to accept this condition, and they seem in any case to have been reluctant to consider any arrangement of an extensive nature, though they were ready to agree to the exchange of small groups. Dr. Junod was therefore unable to achieve the general exchange for which he had hoped before the Nationalists' campaign against the Basques was brought to a victorious conclusion. At the end of May 1937 the Basque Government responded to diplomatic representations on behalf of three German airmen who had fallen into Basque hands and had been sentenced to death, and the three Germans and a Swiss national were exchanged for four foreigners in Nationalist custody. In the middle of June the political prisoners, numbering about 1,000, who were held in custody in Bilbao were released by order of the Basque Government just before the city fell, but in July the authorities refused to accede, except on the condition of reciprocity by the Nationalists, to a British request that political prisoners in other Basque towns should be evacuated in the same way as the refugees who were being taken off in British ships.¹ On the Nationalist side, a British offer of mediation for the release of 2,000 prisoners at Gijón was refused in the last week of September; but the authorities at Salamanca responded favourably in October to French and British representations urging that they should show clemency to prisoners who fell into their hands.

¹ See p. 393, below.

The branch of humanitarian work in Spain in which there was probably the greatest need for foreign help was the evacuation of refugees from the area of fighting, and in this all the available agencies—international organizations like the Red Cross, private charitable associations and Governments—played their part. During the first autumn and winter of the war, the most serious problem in this field was that of the removal of the civilian population of Madrid to other districts; and in this connexion there was one special problem in which a number of Governments were directly interested—namely, the position of refugees who had found an asylum in premises under diplomatic protection.

More than a dozen of the Embassies and Legations in Madrid (the list did not include either the British or the American Embassy) gave refuge during the first weeks of the war to a certain number of persons who believed that their lives were in danger; and altogether several thousand refugees¹ were said to have been housed in this way. The diplomatic representatives of Latin-American states² were particularly hospitable to these political refugees—following in this respect the tradition of their countries, where civil strife was more common than it was in Europe and where it was an accepted principle that, in times of crisis, persons who had reason to fear arrest on account of their political views should take sanctuary in the nearest Embassy or Legation and should be entitled to safe conduct across the frontier. The principle of diplomatic protection of political refugees had indeed been incorporated into Latin-American international law and had formed the subject of conventions signed at the Pan-American Conferences at Havana in 1928 and at Montevideo in 1933. The right to grant asylum was not, however, recognized by European Governments, and the Spanish Republican Government refused for a long time to permit the diplomatic missions in Madrid to carry their

¹ Estimates of the total number of refugees who received diplomatic protection varied between 5,000 and 10,000. According to a statement which was made by Señor Edwards of Chile at a meeting of the League Council on the 25th January, 1937, 'the great majority—perhaps all'—of the refugees were not 'fugitives from Spanish justice who had sought to escape prosecution for political offences, still less were they criminals'. They 'belonged to all social classes and represented every ideology from the Right to the Left'; they 'even included persons who had been closely associated with the Valencia Government; and others who had been received . . . at the request of members of the Spanish Government'. (Señor Edwards mentioned as an instance the case of certain descendants of Christopher Columbus who had been taken into the Chilean Embassy on the written request of the Spanish Foreign Minister.)

² The Embassies or Legations of the Argentine Republic, Bolivia, Chile, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Mexico, Panamá and Peru all provided accommodation for a certain number of refugees.

rescue work to completion by conducting the refugees out of the country. The reluctance of the Madrid Government to concede this diplomatic privilege was partly attributable to the fact that no corresponding asylum was open to their own sympathizers in Nationalist territory; and their attitude seems also to have been influenced by the belief that some of the guests at the Argentinian Ambassador's house at the outbreak of the war,¹ to whose departure from Spain under safe conduct they had reluctantly agreed, had subsequently returned and taken service under General Franco, and by the fear that a similar but more serious abuse of privilege might be expected if the refugees were allowed to leave Madrid. From the point of view of the refugees' hosts, the situation became more and more embarrassing as the course of the campaign brought the fighting closer to Madrid, and difficulties in procuring food were added to the dangers of bombardment and to the risk that the Republican militia might cease to respect the diplomatic immunity of the buildings in which the refugees were housed. In October 1936 the Argentinian Government initiated an attempt to secure the co-operation of all Latin-American countries in bringing pressure to bear upon the Spanish Government, but the Argentinian proposal that the Madrid Government should be threatened with a breach of diplomatic relations unless they consented to the departure of the refugees was not acceptable to certain other Governments (including that of Mexico), and the proposal for a joint *démarche* was dropped. Satisfactory arrangements had apparently been made before the end of the year for the evacuation of refugees from the Argentinian and Mexican Embassies, but in other cases there was a further long delay.

The question of evacuating the refugees was discussed, on the initiative of Chile, at the League Council meetings in December 1936² and January 1937; but the Spanish Government refused to agree to a collective settlement or to any arrangement which savoured of international intervention, and insisted upon bilateral negotiations

¹ See pp. 377-8, above.

² Just before the December meeting of the Council an incident occurred which aroused fresh apprehensions regarding the safety of the large number of refugees who still remained in Embassies and Legations. About 600 persons of anti-Republican sympathies had been given asylum in buildings belonging to the Finnish Legation, which had been evacuated by the diplomatic staff at the end of August and left in the charge of a Spanish citizen. It was this Spaniard, apparently, who had admitted the refugees, and the Spanish Government took the line that his action was an abuse of diplomatic privilege. After a demand for the surrender of the refugees had been refused, the Spanish authorities entered the Legation buildings by force (encountering some resistance), and there arrested them.

with each of the Governments concerned. An understanding was, however, reached at Geneva in January 1937 between the Chilean representative and Señor Álvarez del Vayo to the effect that the refugees should be evacuated by degrees and not all at once; that the Spanish authorities should themselves be responsible for guarding the refugees during their transport from Madrid to their port of embarkation; that they should be taken to a country which was not adjacent to Spain; and that men capable of bearing arms should be subject to supervision which would ensure that they did not return to Spain. In the following month an agreement was reached for the evacuation of more than 1,000 persons from the Chilean Embassy, but their removal did not begin until after the middle of April, and it had not been completed at the end of August. Negotiations with a number of other Governments were reported to have begun early in March, but progress was slow, and the difficulties and delays which were encountered undoubtedly increased the feeling of antagonism towards the Spanish Republicans which had been displayed in many Latin-American countries since the outbreak of the war.¹ At the end of June 1937, when a total of some 4,000 refugees was reported to have been evacuated, the Spanish Government announced that in future men of military age and non-combatants who had taken an active part in politics would be permitted to leave Madrid only on the condition that they were exchanged for men in Nationalist hands who fell into the same categories; and in September 1937, as has been mentioned already,² Dr. Junod of the International Red Cross negotiated an agreement for the exchange of 2,500 men who had taken refuge in Embassies or Legations in Madrid for a similar number of men from Nationalist Spain. At Dr. Junod's request the British Government in the same month chartered a ship in which all the remaining refugees in Madrid (except a certain number in the French Embassy, for whom the French Government were making their own arrangements) could be evacuated. The question of the destination of some of these refugees—especially of those from Latin-American diplomatic buildings—still continued to present difficulties; and in November 1937 it was reported that the Spanish Government had agreed that the diplomatic missions should be free to intern their refugees on ships flying flags other than their own, and that the British Government had offered to make available as many merchant vessels as might be required for this purpose.

The problem of the evacuation of the civilian population of Madrid was not a matter of international controversy, and although the

¹ See also pp. 212–13, above.

² See p. 386, above.

Spanish authorities kept the responsibility for the execution of the arrangements in their own hands they did not refuse to avail themselves of foreign help. In the early months of the war the population of Madrid was greatly increased by an influx of refugees from towns which had been occupied by the Nationalists and from the countryside, and when the capital in its turn came into the front line there was obviously an urgent need for removing as many non-combatants as possible from the danger zone. Towards the end of November 1936 a suggestion for the creation in Madrid of a safety zone in which non-combatants would be immune from air bombardment was made by the International Red Cross, and the Nationalist leaders did actually designate a zone in the north-eastern district of the city, the immunity of which they undertook to respect.¹ The commander of the Republican forces, General Miaja, refused, however, to recognize this safety zone, on the ground that the whole of the civil population of the city could not possibly be accommodated in a few streets, and that a consent to the arrangement would be equivalent to an admission that the Nationalists were justified in bombing the rest of the city.

By the end of November 1936 about a quarter of a million refugees were reported to have been evacuated from Madrid already, and large numbers were leaving daily during December, but the situation remained extremely serious. The plight of the civilian population of Madrid made a strong impression upon all the foreigners who visited the city during the winter of 1936-7. The delegation of British Members of Parliament,² for instance, who went to Valencia and Madrid at the end of November 1936, in order to see the situation for themselves and 'to use whatever influence' was 'possible as neutrals to mitigate the horrors and sufferings which . . . characterized the conflict',³ reported that there was an immediate and urgent need of large-scale international action to help in evacuating non-combatants. It has been mentioned that the League's medical mission which went to Spain at the end of December at the request of the Spanish Government recommended that half the civilian population of Madrid (the number of which was estimated at about 1,200,000) should be evacuated as soon as possible, and the mission also made certain practical suggestions regarding the provision of transport and housing accommodation for these refugees and the distribution of

¹ The Nationalists also agreed to a request from the diplomatic corps that the zone should be extended by about one square mile in order to take in the British and American Embassies and certain other diplomatic buildings.

² See also p. 383, above.

³ Quoted from a statement issued to the Press by the delegation on the 19th November, 1936 (*The Times*, 20th November, 1936).

food to them. It was in the provision of motor vehicles for transport and of supplies of food and clothing that there was the greatest scope for foreign help; but although private charitable organizations in Great Britain and other countries gave a considerable amount of assistance in these respects,¹ the transport facilities for refugees from Madrid never appear to have been adequate to meet the need. One great difficulty which was encountered by the authorities was the extreme reluctance of the Madrileños to leave their homes, many of them refused to depart unless they were compelled to go, and some of those who had been evacuated were said to have made their way back to the city.

The refugees from Madrid were accommodated for the most part in other districts of Spain, and many of these unfortunate people had to take flight time after time as the tide of war rolled onwards and the extent of the territory under Republican control became steadily less. So far as children were concerned, however, efforts were made from the beginning of the war by organizations such as the Save the Children International Union, the Red Cross and the Society of Friends to find homes in foreign countries for a certain number, especially those who had lost one or both of their parents. In December 1936 the French Government offered to find accommodation in France for several thousand children who had been evacuated from the zone of fighting; smaller numbers were taken to Belgium and Holland; and by the spring of 1937 batches of children were, it was reported,² being sent as far afield as Russia (at the special request, apparently, of the parents of the children concerned) and even Mexico (arrangements for the despatch of 500 orphans to that country were reported to be under negotiation in April 1937).

A certain number of adult refugees were also taken from Spanish ports in the early weeks of the war by British and other foreign ships which had been sent to Spanish waters primarily for the purpose of evacuating nationals of the states whose flags the ships were flying.³ Most of these refugees were taken in the first place to France (which also received a large influx by land on the capture of Irún by the Nationalists at the beginning of September), and though a good

¹ Towards the end of April 1937 the British National Joint Committee for Spanish Relief was reported to be concentrating its efforts on the despatch of motor buses and lorries for the evacuation of refugees from Madrid as a result of investigations made by the Duchess of Atholl, the Chairman of the Committee, who had recently visited Madrid with a deputation of women and found that the need for additional transport facilities was acute.

² See an article in *The New York Times*, 10th April, 1937.

³ See p. 230, above.

many of them no doubt returned to districts in Spain which were under the control of the party with which they sympathized, the French authorities had to cope with a steadily rising number of refugees, most of them with no means of support. In the spring of 1937 the progress of the Nationalists' northern campaign raised the question of evacuating refugees from Bilbao and other northern ports in an acute form.¹ Throughout April detachments of children were being taken from Bilbao to France—some of them in British warships—and towards the end of that month the Basque Government made a formal request to the French and British Governments for assistance in evacuating all the women and children from Bilbao. At that time, warships belonging to the Nationalists were doing their best to blockade Bilbao in order to prevent ships carrying food (a good deal of which had been purchased with funds collected by foreign charitable associations) from entering the port.² The Basque authorities therefore asked in the first place for French and British protection for ships carrying refugees, and this the Governments agreed to give.³ British merchant ships which had succeeded in running the blockade of Bilbao took off a considerable number of refugees at the beginning of May, and the Basque Government chartered some vessels specially for this purpose. The British Government also authorized the removal of 4,000 Basque children to England, but the children, who arrived at Southampton on the 23rd May, were all supported at private cost.⁴ British and French consular agents supervised the embarkation of the refugees from Basque ports in

¹ The need for foreign assistance in the matter had been thrown into relief by the fate of the refugees—numbering, it was estimated, more than 200,000—who fled from Málaga when it was taken by the Nationalists early in February 1937. The civil population of the town, together with refugees from the countryside and a certain number of militiamen, were subjected to relentless bombardment as they attempted to make their escape along the coast road to Almería—the only route that was open to them. (See also p. 64, above).

² See above, pp. 306–9.

³ The British Government ordered warships to give the required protection on the high seas, but not to enter territorial waters. This was in accordance with the policy which they followed in respect of the protection of British merchant ships trading with Spain (see pp. 307–8, above).

⁴ The question of the repatriation of the children became a matter of political controversy later in the year, after the completion of the Nationalists' conquest of Northern Spain made it possible to argue that there was no need for the children to be separated any longer from their friends and relations in Spain (see also p. 153, above). The National Joint Committee for Spanish Relief, which had made itself responsible for the children, took the line that they ought not to return unless and until their parents or guardians asked for them; but at the end of October 1937 the repatriation began of some 800 children in respect of whom applications which the Committee believed to be genuine had been received.

order to make sure that no men of military age escaped in this way, but this precaution did not make the arrangement acceptable to the Nationalists, who protested against it¹ and offered instead to provide a neutral zone in which non-combatants could reside—an offer which was rejected as completely impracticable by the Basque Government.

Altogether, some 30,000 refugees were said to have been taken from Bilbao, for the most part under the protection of British warships, before the town fell into the Nationalists' hands on the 19th June. Santander then became the principal refugee centre, and by the third week of August it was estimated that there were more than 100,000 refugees in or near the town. The problem of evacuation from Santander was complicated at first by difficulties which arose in connexion with British naval protection, owing to the fact that there was no British consular agent at the port who could supervise the embarkation. By the beginning of July arrangements had been made with the French authorities for checking the refugees, and British naval escort was again provided for ships taking refugees from Santander to France; but with the shortening of the coast-line under Republican control it became easier for the Nationalists to tighten their blockade, and during July and August ships had difficulty in getting into Santander to pick up refugees. At the end of August, when the fall of Santander was imminent, refugees (including men who had been in the fighting line)² escaped in every

¹ General Franco appears to have expressed the opinion that the proposal for removing non-combatants was a ruse on the part of 'Reds', who wanted to destroy Bilbao rather than let it fall into Nationalist hands. The view that British assistance in the evacuation of refugees was in effect intervention was held by a certain proportion of the British public, and there appears to have been some doubt even in the minds of some members of the British Government whether humanitarian assistance of this kind was strictly compatible with the policy of non-intervention. Mr. Duff Cooper, for instance, in answering a question in the House of Commons on the 22nd July, 1937, suggested that it was difficult to draw the line between humanitarian and military assistance, and that to supply food or diminish the demand for it by taking away non-combatants might be considered to fall into the latter category. Mr. Duff Cooper drew a parallel between foreign volunteers who offered their services to one party or the other in Spain and merchant ships which performed valuable assistance by taking food to, or women and children from, beleaguered Spanish ports. His concern was, however, to defend the policy of refusing to allow British warships to see such ships safe into harbour, and he did not imply that the protection of refugee ships on the high seas ought to cease.

² These combatants were disarmed on arrival in France and conducted immediately to the Spanish frontier, unless they were wounded. The French Government took the line that since the parties in Spain had not been granted belligerent rights it was not necessary that combatant refugees should be interned in the country to which they had escaped, in accordance with the practice followed in cases of international war.

kind of vessel that was available, even small fishing boats, and 30,000 persons were reported to have arrived at French ports in the course of a few days. There was a similar influx into France in the third week of October, on the occasion of the fall of Gijón, when some 30,000 refugees were reported to have been taken off in British ships alone.¹

By receiving and maintaining refugees from Spain France had for many months been making a very substantial contribution towards the relief of the suffering caused by the war—probably, indeed, the most important contribution made by any single agency at work in the humanitarian field. By the middle of 1937, however, the French authorities had been forced to the conclusion that it was no longer possible for them to extend hospitality to all the thousands of Spanish men, women and children who had sought and were still seeking an asylum on French soil. At the time of the fall of Bilbao there were already about 40,000 refugees in France, and though part of the cost of their maintenance was borne by private persons or institutions, there was a very considerable balance which was a charge upon the Exchequer.² At the beginning of July the French Government announced that refugees would in future be given every facility for transport through France to other parts of Spain, but that they would not be allowed to remain in the country unless they were self-supporting. Nevertheless, the number of refugees accommodated in camps and centres in France continued to mount; there were believed to be 50,000 before the influx from Santander at the end of August, and 55,000 a month later. At the end of September the French Ministry of the Interior announced that all the refugees dependent upon the public authorities, with the exception of those in need of medical attention, would be repatriated within fifteen days. The refugees were free to choose whether they would return to territory in the hands of the Nationalists or to Catalonia; and by the middle of October it was reported that 8,000 had been sent back into Nationalist Spain via Irún and nearly 23,000 into Catalonia. When the fall of Gijón brought a fresh spate of refugees, many of them men who had been engaged in the fighting, the Ministry of the Interior issued an order that all men between the ages of eighteen and forty-five must leave France within forty-eight hours—though

¹ Some of the Asturian refugees who were attempting to make their escape in small boats were reported to have lost their lives in a storm in the Bay of Biscay.

² The French Government seem to have borne the whole cost of feeding the refugees, while other expenses were met from local (largely voluntary) funds. There were about 1,000 camps and centres scattered throughout the country.

in special cases the authorities were prepared to grant a slight extension of the time and to consider the possibility of permitting men to go to countries other than Spain. In view of the precarious situation of their own finances, the French Government could hardly be blamed for taking steps to relieve themselves of a burden which they had already borne for many months and which was becoming heavier every day, but the practical effect of these French measures upon the fortunes of the Republican cause in Spain could hardly fail to be serious. The destitute persons who poured into Catalonia across the French frontier during October 1937 swelled the vast number of refugees from all parts of Spain for whom the Republican authorities were responsible,¹ and at the end of October foreign observers reported that the situation of the refugees was disastrous. Added to an actual shortage of food, which was becoming more serious as the weeks passed and which foreign assistance could do relatively little to alleviate, was a shortage of petrol which made it extremely difficult to distribute such food as was available, and the lack of medical stores and of soap made the danger of large-scale epidemics even more acute than the danger of starvation. Although the plight of the civilian population during the winter of 1937-8 did not apparently weaken the Republicans' will to resist (any more than the presence of non-combatants in Madrid had undermined the *moral* of the defenders during the previous winter), it was undoubtedly a serious handicap upon them; and it seemed possible that the burden of maintaining refugees might eventually prove a factor of hardly less importance than inequality in military strength in deciding the outcome of the struggle.

¹ The Spanish Government themselves estimated the total number of refugees on their hands as high as 3,000,000. The majority were still in the central provinces, but the number in Catalonia at the end of 1937 was perhaps in the neighbourhood of 800,000.

APPENDIX

CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS, 1936-7

1936, Feb 16. Popular Front gained majority in general election March 1, second ballot held in certain constituencies. Feb 19, Señor Portela Valladares' Government resigned. Feb. 20, Popular Front Government took office under Señor Azaña. April 7, Señor Alcalá Zamora deposed from Presidency. Señor Martínez Barrio took office as acting President. May 10, Señor Azaña elected President. May 13, Señor Casares Quiroga took office as Premier.

July 12-13, Murder of Lieutenant Castillo of the Guardias de Asalto and of Señor Calvo Sotelo, a leading Right-wing politician

July 17. Nationalist revolt broke out in Morocco July 18-19, revolt broke out all over Spain. During the night Señor Casares Quiroga's Government resigned. Señor Martínez Barrio formed a Government on July 19, which was succeeded a few hours later by a Government with Señor Giral as Premier. After the first week of fighting the chief towns held by the Nationalists were Burgos, Vitoria, Pamplona, Valladolid, Segovia, Avila, Salamanca, León, Ferrol, Coruña and Vigo, in northern Spain; Saragossa, Huesca and Teruel in the east; and Seville, Córdoba, Granada, Cádiz, Algeciras and La Linea in the south. The Nationalists were also in control of Morocco, the Canary Islands, and all the Balearic Islands except Minorca.

July 25. Nationalists announced that General Cabanellas had formed a provisional Government at Burgos. Republicans occupied Albacete.

July 25. French Government decided to prohibit export of war material to Spain, excluding commercial aircraft ordered before July 18th.

July 29. Nationalists occupied Huelva

Aug. 1. French proposal for a non-intervention agreement sent to London and Rome. Aug. 3, speech by M. Delbos at Sarlat condemning ideological crusades. Aug. 4, M. François-Poncet discussed non-intervention with Herr von Neurath, and the British Government sent a favourable reply to the French proposal. Aug. 5, Soviet Government accepted principle of non-intervention. Aug. 6, Italian and Belgian replies stated to have been received in Paris. French Government circulated draft text of a non-intervention declaration. Aug. 8, French Government announced that commercial aircraft would be covered by arms embargo. Aug. 9, French arms embargo came into effect.

Aug. 8. Republicans occupied Ibiza and Formentera. The Nationalists reoccupied both islands towards the end of September. Aug. 9, Nationalists occupied Mérida.

Aug. 9. German *chargé d'affaires* in London gave British Government assurances regarding intervention. Aug. 10 and 15, Spanish Republican Government sent protests to French Government regarding non-intervention proposal. Aug. 10, Soviet Government approved French draft proposal. Aug. 11, Italian reply presented to French Government asking for ban on volunteers, subscriptions and other

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forms of 'moral support'. The Netherlands, Poland and Sweden put arms embargo into force. U.S. Government issued statement of policy Aug. 14, Portugal stated to have accepted proposal 'in principle'. Switzerland prohibited export of arms, collection of funds and despatch of volunteers.

Aug. 14 Nationalists took Badajoz

Aug. 15. Exchange of Franco-British declarations regarding non-intervention and arms embargo. Statement of policy issued by British Foreign Office.

Aug. 16 A Catalan expeditionary force landed in Majorca

Aug. 17. German Government accepted terms of Franco-British declaration on certain conditions including the participation of other arms-producing states.

Aug. 18 German merchant ship *Kamerun* stopped by Republican warship off Cádiz.

Aug. 19. British arms embargo came into force.

Aug. 21 Italy adhered to Franco-British declaration. Portuguese Government accepted terms of declaration, subject to reservations.

Aug. 23, formal adherence of U.S.S.R. to declaration

Aug. 24 German Government announced their decision to put measures provided for in declaration into force. Aug. 26, French Government proposed that a non-intervention committee should be set up in London. Aug. 27, Portugal issued decree proclaiming arms embargo.

Aug. 28, Italy and U.S.S.R. proclaimed arms embargo.

Sept. 3 Nationalists occupied Talavera.

Sept. 4. Señor Giral's Government resigned and Señor Largo Caballero formed a Government including Socialists and Communists. Republican troops recalled from Majorca.

Sept. 5. Nationalists entered Trún.

Sept. 6. Statement of policy by M. Blum at meeting of Fédération Socialiste de la Seine.

Sept. 8. Prohibition of transit of war material through France took effect.

Sept. 9. First meeting of Non-Intervention Committee in London. Portugal and Switzerland were the only European states not to send representatives.

Sept. 13. Nationalists entered San Sebastián.

Sept. 15. Spanish Republican Government sent protests to Germany, Italy and Portugal with regard to supply of arms to Nationalists.

Sept. 22 Uruguay broke off diplomatic relations with Republican Spain.

Sept. 25. Señor Álvarez del Vayo, the Republican Foreign Minister, made speech at League Assembly protesting against application of non-intervention policy. Sept. 26, Republican memorandum sent to League Secretary-General. Oct. 2, second Republican memorandum issued at Geneva.

Sept. 28. Nationalists entered Toledo and relieved garrison of Alcázar.

Sept. 28. Portuguese representative attended meeting of Non-Intervention Committee for the first time.

Oct. 1 Cortes approved Basque Autonomy Statute.

Oct 1. General Franco invested with title of Commander-in-Chief of the Nationalist Army and Chief of the Spanish State. Oct 2, Technical Council of State established at Burgos

Oct 6. Soviet Government sent note to Non-Intervention Committee accusing Portugal of assisting insurgents. Oct. 7, further Soviet note to Committee threatening that Soviet Government would consider themselves released from their obligations under the agreement if other Governments continued to violate it.

Oct. 7 Señor Aguirre took office as President of Basque Government.

Oct. 8, Basque Cabinet took office.

Oct. 9. Non-Intervention Committee held the first of a series of meetings to discuss allegations of intervention by Germany, Italy, Portugal and Russia. Oct 12, Soviet proposal for naval supervision of Portuguese ports laid before Committee.

Oct. 17. Nationalist relief force reached Oviedo.

Oct. 23. Portugal broke off diplomatic relations with Republican Spain.

Oct. 23. Non-Intervention Committee received note from Soviet Government declaring that they could not consider themselves bound by the agreement to a greater extent than other Governments, and proposing that the Republican Government should again be allowed to buy arms abroad. Oct. 24, British representative on Chairman's Sub-Committee initiated discussion concerning means of supervising the execution of the agreement.

Oct. 29. Statements of policy by Mr. Eden and Mr. Baldwin during a debate in the House of Commons

Nov. 4. Reconstruction of Largo Caballero Government to include Anarcho-Syndicalists.

Nov. 6. Nationalists occupied Carabanchel Alto, Villaverde, and other places on the western outskirts of Madrid. During the night the Republican Government left Madrid for Valencia. Nov. 7, Nationalists made unsuccessful attacks on the Toledo and Segovia bridgeheads, and advanced into park of Casa del Campo. Nov. 8, first detachments of International Brigades arrived in Madrid.

Nov. 10. Guatemala and Salvador recognized Nationalist Government

Nov. 12-13. Non-Intervention Committee discussed proposal for the supervision of Spanish ports and land frontiers, and announced its provisional acceptance.

Nov. 15. Nationalists besieging Madrid entered University City

Nov. 17. Nationalist Government announced their intention of blockading and bombarding the port of Barcelona.

Nov. 18. Germany and Italy recognized Nationalist Government.

Nov. 23. Statement by Mr. Eden in House of Commons regarding belligerent rights and the protection of British shipping.

Nov. 26. Albania recognized Nationalist Government.

Nov. 27. Republican Government appealed to League Council with regard to German and Italian intervention.

Dec. 1. Debate in House of Commons on second reading of Merchant Shipping (Carriage of Munitions to Spain) Bill. Dec. 3, Bill became law.

Dec. 2. Nicaragua stated to have recognized Nationalist Government.

1936 (cont.)

Dec. 2. Non-Intervention Committee decided that supervision proposals should be communicated to both parties in Spain and that the Chairman's Sub-Committee should begin to discuss the question of volunteers

Dec. 4 French and British Governments asked Governments of Germany, Italy, Portugal and U.S.S.R to co-operate in mediating between Republicans and Nationalists and in organizing an effective scheme of control. Dec. 9, Soviet Government replied to this proposal. Dec. 12, German, Italian and Portuguese Governments replied.

Dec. 10-12 League Council considered Republican Government's appeal.

Dec. 16. Republican Government replied to Non-Intervention Committee's proposal for supervision. Dec. 19, Nationalist Government replied

Dec. 18 Mr Eden made representations to German Ambassador concerning the alleged landing of German troops in Spain. Dec. 23, M. Delbos made similar representations to German Ambassador in Paris.

Dec. 22. Chairman's Sub-Committee of Non-Intervention Committee agreed that sub-committees should be appointed to deal with 'volunteers' and the financial aspect of indirect intervention

Dec. 24. British and French diplomatic representatives in Berlin, Rome, Lisbon and Moscow were instructed to make representations on the subject of the volunteers. Dec. 29, Soviet reply to Anglo-French *démarche*.

Dec. 24. German steamer *Palos* seized by Basques. German warships subsequently took reprisals on Republican ships.

Dec. 31. Anglo-Italian exchange of notes regarding integrity of present territories of Spain. (Cmd. 5348.)

1937, Jan. 1. Non-Intervention Committee's supervision plan communicated to the Republican Government, who subsequently accepted it, subject to certain reservations, and to the Nationalists, who rejected it. Jan. 2, Portuguese Government announced that they would not co-operate in the realization of the plan.

Jan. 2. Signing of Anglo-Italian declaration concerning assurances with regard to the Mediterranean. (Cmd. 5479.)

Jan. 5. Portuguese reply to Anglo-French *démarche* of Dec. 24, 1936, reached Paris and London. Jan. 7, German and Italian Governments replied to *démarche*

Jan. 7. French Foreign Minister conferred with military and naval authorities regarding alleged German activities in Morocco. Jan. 10, Herr Hitler assured French Ambassador that Germany had no designs on the territorial integrity of Spain or the Spanish possessions.

Jan. 8. Amendment extending U.S. Neutrality Act to cover war in Spain became law.

Jan. 9. British Cabinet approved terms of note suggesting that the six Governments chiefly interested should take individual action to pre-

vent the departure of volunteers. Jan 10, Foreign Enlistment Act of 1870 declared to be applicable to the war in Spain. Jan. 12 and 15, Portuguese and Soviet Governments replied to British note. Jan. 15 and 21, French Chamber and Senate passed legislation prohibiting enlistment or transport of volunteers. Jan 25, German and Italian Governments replied to British note.

Jan 28. Chairman's Sub-Committee of Non-Intervention Committee reached provisional agreement on revised supervision scheme.

Feb 6 Beginning of Nationalist offensive on the Jarama front, in the direction of the Madrid–Valencia road. Feb 8, Nationalists entered Málaga.

Feb 20 Prohibition of enlistment or despatch of volunteers came into force at midnight for all states parties to the Non-Intervention Agreement.

Feb. 20 Announcement of Portuguese Government's consent to supervision of frontier by British observers.

March 8. Non-Intervention Committee gave final approval to scheme for supervising land and sea traffic with Spain (*Cmd. 5399*), and adopted resolution providing for discussion of withdrawal of volunteers and prohibition of indirect intervention.

March 8. Beginning of Nationalist offensive on Guadalajara front, north-east of Madrid. Three Italian divisions were reported to have taken part in it. March 13, Republican counter-attack began.

March 18, Republicans reoccupied Brihuega.

March 23. At a meeting of the Chairman's Sub-Committee, Count Grandi announced his Government's refusal to discuss withdrawal of volunteers. March 24, Soviet representative made new allegations against Italy at a plenary session of the Committee.

March 31. Beginning of Nationalist offensive against the Basques.

April 12. Mr. Baldwin stated in House of Commons that British shipping had been warned not to enter Bilbao area. April 19–20, British steamer *Seven Seas Spray* ran blockade into Bilbao.

April 19. General Franco signed decree uniting Falangist and Traditionalist movements.

April 19–20. Supervision scheme put into operation on a skeleton basis at midnight on April 19–20 and into full operation on April 30.

April 26. Bombing of Guernica.

May 3–6. Unsuccessful rising by Left-wing extremists in Barcelona.

May 13. British destroyer *Hunter* damaged by floating mine.

May 15. Resignation of Señor Largo Caballero. May 17, Señor Negrín formed a Government which did not include Anarcho-Syndicalists or Left-wing Socialists.

May 24. Italian warship *Barletta* bombed by Republican aeroplanes at Palma.

May 28–29. Republican Government raised question of Italian intervention at meetings of League Council. (Text of documents presented to Council in *L.N.O.J.* Special Supplement No. 165.) May 29, League Council passed resolution condemning use of methods of warfare contrary to international law, in particular the bombing of open towns.

May 29. German warship *Deutschland* bombed by Republican aeroplanes.

1937 (cont.)

at Palma May 31, German warships retaliated by bombarding Almería. German and Italian Governments announced their decision to withdraw from naval control scheme and Non-Intervention Committee.

June 3. General Mola killed in aeroplane accident.

June 12. British and French Governments reached agreement with Governments of Germany and Italy regarding interference with warships engaged on patrol duty. June 16, German and Italian Governments announced their decision to return to the Non-Intervention Committee and to resume participation in naval control

June 18 Alleged submarine attack on German cruiser *Leipzig*.

June 18. Non-Intervention Committee approved the presentation to both parties in Spain of an appeal for the adoption of humarer methods of warfare.

June 19. Nationalists entered Bilbao.

June 21-22. Four-Power conversations in London regarding *Leipzig* incident. June 23, German and Italian Governments announced their definitive withdrawal from the naval patrol scheme but not from the Non-Intervention Agreement or Committee.

June 24. Nationalist Government issued decree withdrawing administrative privileges from Guipúzcoa and Vizcaya.

June 25. Statement by Mr. Chamberlain in House of Commons referring to *Deutschland* and *Leipzig* incidents and to the danger of starting an 'avalanche'.

June 29. Proposal for Anglo-French naval control submitted to Chairman's sub-committee. July 2, German-Italian counter-proposals submitted suggesting grant of belligerent rights.

June 30. Mr. Eden announced in House of Commons that facilities granted to British observers on Portuguese-Spanish frontier had been withdrawn.

July 6. Republican offensive began west of Madrid. Brunete occupied.

July 9. At meeting of Non-Intervention Committee British Government accepted invitation to prepare compromise proposals.

July 12. Speech by M. Blum at Marseilles referring to the preservation of peace by 'the lie of non-intervention'.

July 13. French Government withdrew facilities granted to international observers on Franco-Spanish frontier.

July 14. British proposals regarding supervision of Spanish ports, granting of belligerent rights and withdrawal of volunteers, circulated to members of Non-Intervention Committee (Cmd. 5221).

July 16, Committee adopted proposals as basis of discussion.

July 18. Nationalist counter-attack west of Madrid. Brunete retaken some days later.

July 20. Deadlock reached in Non-Intervention Committee on question whether withdrawal of volunteers should be discussed before the granting of belligerent rights. July 29, Soviet representative stated that his Government might reconsider their decision not to grant belligerent rights to Nationalists when once all volunteers and Moorish troops had left Spain.

July 27 and Aug. 2. Exchange of personal messages between Mr Chamberlain and Signor Mussolini.

Aug. 6. British, French and Italian merchant ships attacked by aircraft near Algiers Aug. 13, French merchant ship attacked by submarine off Tunis Attacks on ships by 'piratical' aircraft, submarines and surface warships continued throughout August.

Aug. 14. Beginning of Nationalist offensive against Santander

Aug. 20 Speech by Signor Mussolini at Palermo referring to Italy's Mediterranean policy.

Aug. 21. Republican Government appealed to League Council regarding alleged Italian piracy Aug. 22, circular note from Republican Government sent to all European states.

Aug. 24 Surrender of Basque militia at Laredo and Santoña. Beginning of Republican offensive against Saragossa. Aug. 26, Italians and Nationalists entered Santander.

Aug. 26. Turkish Government issued warning regarding presence of foreign submarines in Turkish waters

Aug. 31-Sept. 1. British destroyer *Havock* attacked by submarine.

Sept. 2 British Government accepted French proposal for the holding of a conference on piracy. Sept. 6, Anglo-French invitations to Conference at Nyon issued to Germany, Italy, U S S R, Albania, Bulgaria, Egypt, Greece, Jugoslavia, Rumania and Turkey. Sept. 6, Soviet note to Italy demanding compensation for sinking of Russian merchant ship. Sept. 9, Germany and Italy announced that they would not send representatives to Nyon.

Sept. 9. Speech by M. Daladier declaring that non-intervention policy must not result in danger to Pyrenean frontier or French communications with North Africa.

Sept. 10 Conference opened at Nyon. Sept. 14, agreement signed. Sept. 17, supplementary agreement signed regarding pirate aircraft (*Cmd 5568-9*).

Sept. 16 and Oct. 4. Republican Government's appeal of Aug. 21 came before League Council.

Sept. 18-Oct. 2. Spanish situation discussed at several sessions of League Assembly. Oct. 2, resolution intimating that non-intervention might be terminated unless Governments respected their obligations was accepted by majority of Assembly but not formally adopted owing to opposition from Albania and Portugal.

Sept. 21. Italian Government agreed to send naval experts to Paris to discuss participation of Italy in Nyon arrangements. Sept. 27, naval discussions began in Paris, resulting in agreement on Sept. 30.

Sept. 22. Conversations between M. Delbos and Signor Bova-Scoppa at Geneva.

Sept. 24 and Oct. 2. French and British Governments made proposal to Italian Government for tripartite conversations on Spanish question. Oct. 10, Italian Government rejected proposal.

Sept. 25-9. Herr Hitler and Signor Mussolini referred to Spanish situation in speeches made during Signor Mussolini's visit to Germany.

Oct. 15. In a speech at Llandudno Mr. Eden declared that the patience of the non-intervening states was 'well-nigh exhausted'.

1937 (*cont.*)

Oct. 16. Chairman's Sub-Committee of Non-Intervention Committee resumed work. French representative stated that his Government would reserve full liberty of action if the Committee did not come to an agreement as soon as possible.

Oct. 18. Semi-official statement issued in Rome estimating total of Italians in Spain at 40,000.

Oct. 21 Nationalists gained control of Gijón, Avilés, and Oviedo.

Oct. 29 Speaking at Lille, M. Delbos insisted that volunteers must be withdrawn and the independence and territorial integrity of Spain must be respected.

Oct. 31. Republican Government announced their decision to move from Valencia to Barcelona.

Nov. 4 and 8. Statements by Mr. Chamberlain and Mr. Eden in House of Commons concerning the appointment of British agents in Nationalist Spain and *vice versa*.

Nov. 4 Non-Intervention Committee adopted two resolutions recording acceptance of British plan of July 14 by all states members except the U.S S.R., subject to reservations regarding the Soviet attitude on the part of Germany and Italy.

Nov. 11. Italian participation in Nyon arrangements became effective.

Nov. 16 Sir R. Hodgson appointed British agent in Nationalist Spain

Nov. 22, Nationalists announced that the Duke of Alba would be appointed Nationalist agent in Great Britain.

Nov. 16 Acceptance in principle by Soviet Government of provisions of British plan with regard to belligerent rights.

Nov. 20 and Dec. 1. Nationalist and Republican replies to Non-Intervention Committee's latest proposals conveyed to British Government.

Nov. 28. Nationalist Government issued warning of renewed blockade of Republican coast and withdrawal of protection from neutral zones at Valencia and Barcelona.

Dec. 1. Japan recognized Nationalist Government.

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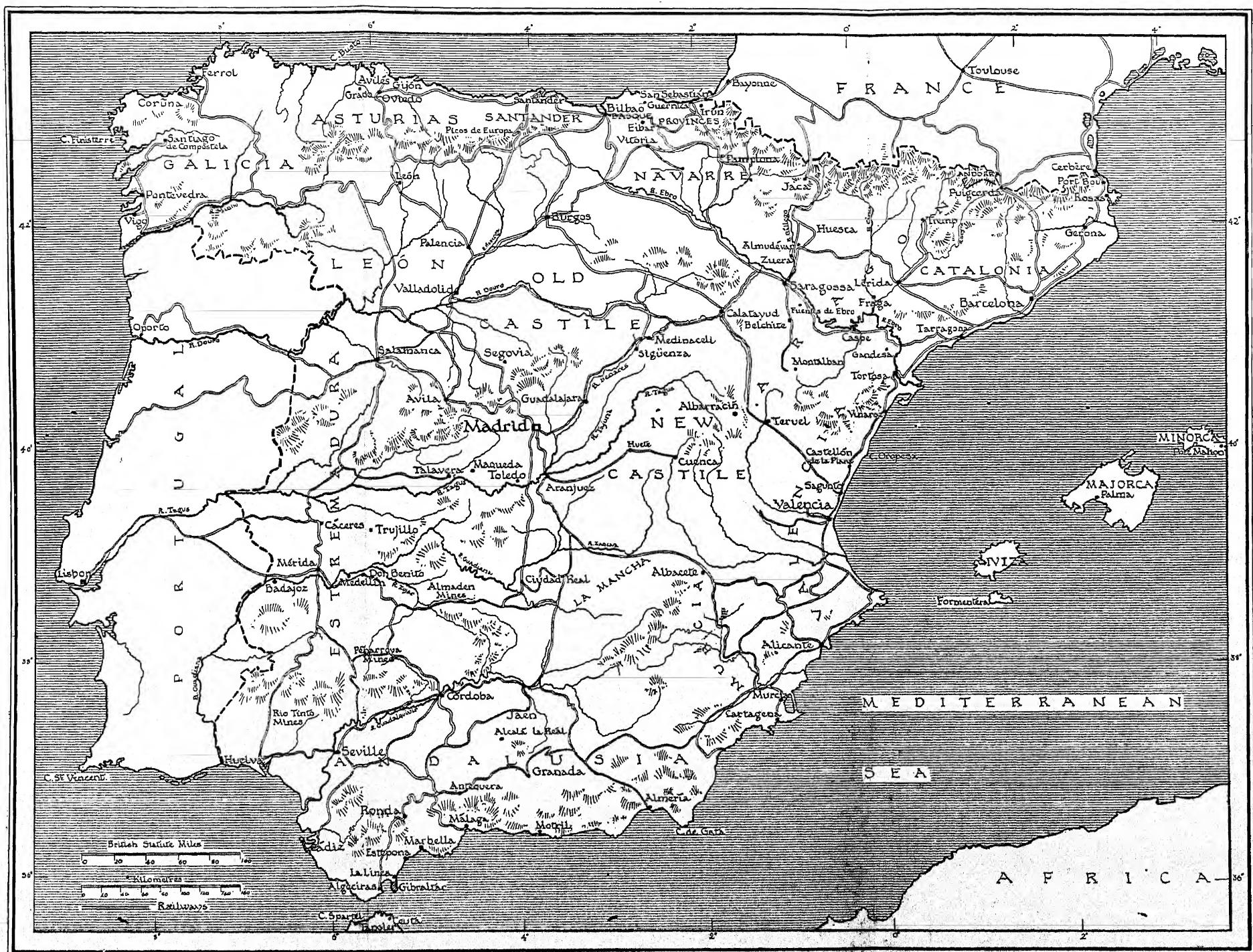
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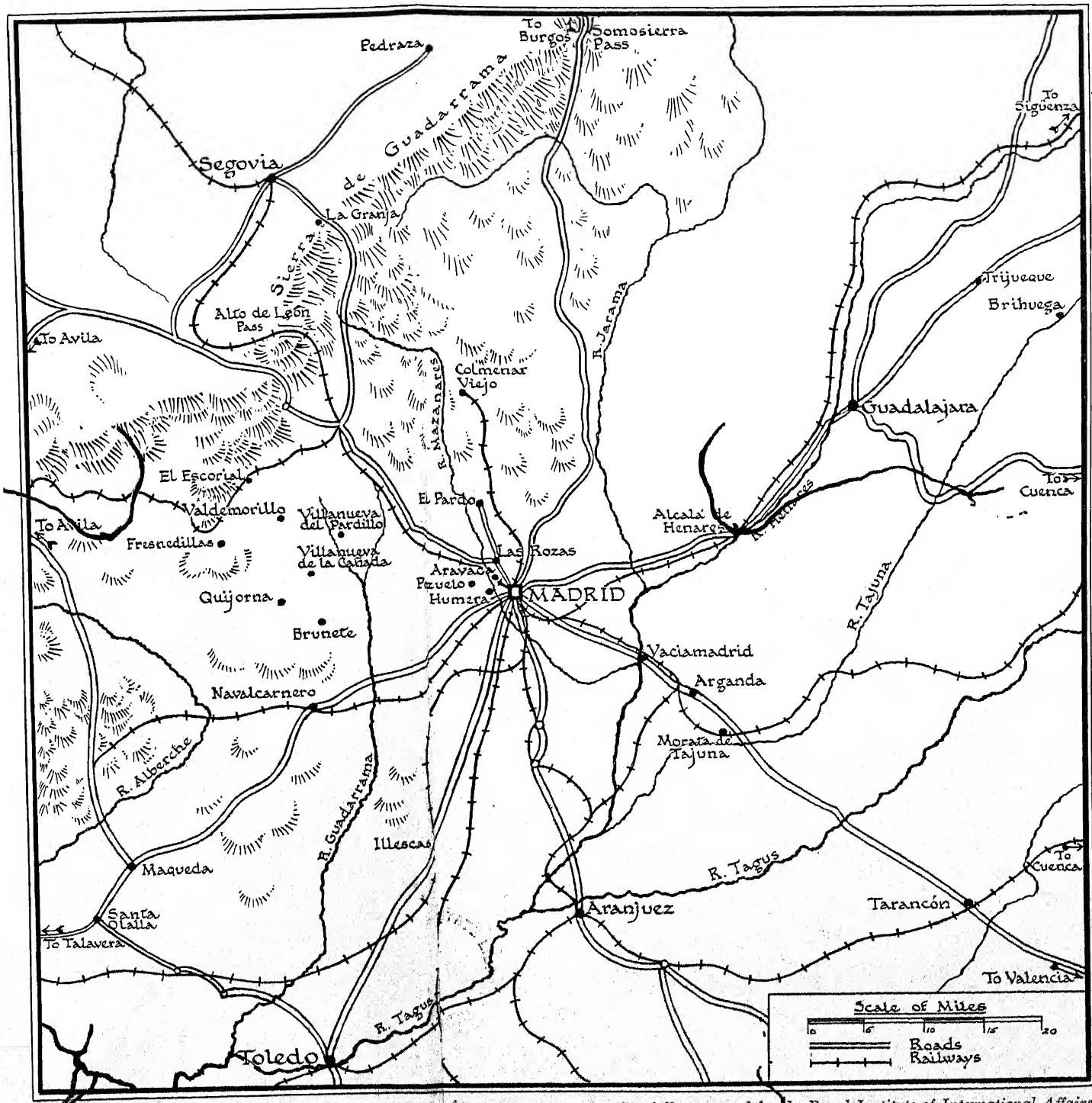
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